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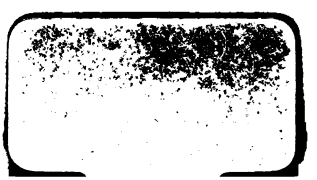

THE MYSTERIES OF PARIS,

BY

M. EUGÈNE SUE.

THE

MYSTERIES OF PARIS;

FROM THE FRENCH

OF

M. EUGÈNE SUE.

BY

J. D. SMITH, ESQ.

ILLUSTRATED WITH

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THE MYSTERIES OF PARIS.

PART VII. CONTINUED.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PORTRAIT.

At the name of Ferrand, Sarah's voice faltered so that La Chouette stepped back with alarm. "The notary," repeated Sarah, "gave you this child, and—" she could not finish. Her emotion was too violent; with her hands stretched towards La Chouette, trembling violently, surprise and joy were expressed on her countenance.

"But I did not know you were going to fire up in this manner, my little lady," said the old woman. "Yet it is very plain. Ten years ago, an old acquaintance, Tournemine, said to me, 'Do you wish to take charge of a little girl that some one wants to get rid of? If she lives or dies, all the same; there is a thousand francs to gain; you may do with the child what you please."

"Ten years ago?" cried Sarah. "Ten years." "A little blonde." "A little blonde." "With blue eyes?" "With blue eyes, blue as the bleuets." "And it is she, who, at the farm—" "We packed up for Saint Lazare. I must say that I did not expect to find her there—this Pegriotte."

"Oh! my God!" cried Sarah, falling on her knees, and raising her hands and eyes towards heaven; "Thy ways are impenetrable. I bow before thy mysterious providence. Oh! if such happiness were possible—but no, I cannot believe it; it would be too much—no!" Then, suddenly rising, she said to La Chouette, who looked at her with amazement, "Come." And Sarah walked before the old woman with hurried steps. At the end of the alley, she ascended some steps leading to the glass door of a cabinet, sumptuously furnished. At the moment when La Chouette was about to enter, Sarah made her a sign to remain without. Then she rung a bell violently. A servant appeared.

"I am not at home to any one; let no one in; do you understand? absolutely no one." The domestic retired, and Sarah, to

be more secure, locked the door. La Chouette heard the orders given to the servant, and saw Sarah lock the door. The countess, turning to her, said, "Come in quickly, and shut the door." La Chouette obeyed. Hastily opening a secretary, Sarah took from it an ebony casket, which she placed on a desk in the middle of the room, and made a sign for La Chouette to come near her. The casket contained many jewel boxes, placed one on the other, enclosing magnificent ornaments. Sarah was so impatient to reach the bottom of the casket, that she threw out on the table these boxes, splendidly furnished with necklaces, bracelets, and diadems, where rubies, emeralds, and diamonds, sparkled with a thousand fires. La Chouette was astounded. She was armed, she was shut up alone with the countess, her flight was easy, secure. An infernal idea crossed the mind of this monster. But to execute this new misdeed, she must get her poniard from the basket, and draw near to Sarah, without exciting her suspicion. With the cunning of a tiger-cat, who crawls and treacherously advances on its prey, the old woman profited by the pre-occupation of the countess to steal round the bureau which separated her from her victim. She had already commenced this treacherous revolution, when she was obliged to stop suddenly, Sarah drew a medallion from the bottom of the box, leaned on the table, handed it La Chouette with a trembling hand, and said, "Look at this portrait." "It is La Pegriotte!" cried La Chouette, struck with the great likeness; "it is the little girl who was given to me; I see her as she was when Tournemine brought her to me. There is her thick curly hair which I cut off at once, and sold well!" "You recognise her, it was she? Oh! I conjure you, do not deceive me!" "I tell you, my little lady, that it is La Pegriotte; it is as if I could see her before me," said La Chouette, trying to approach Sarah without being remarked;" "even now she looks like this portrait. If you saw her, you would be struck with it."

Sarah had experienced no sorrow, no fright on learning that her child had, during ten years, lived miserable and abandoned. No remorse on thinking that she herself had torn her from the peaceful retreat where Rodolphe had placed her. This unnatural mother did not at once interrogate La Chouette with terrible anxiety as to the past life of her child. No; ambition with Sarah had for a long time stifled maternal tenderness.

It was not joy at finding her daughter which transported her,

it was the certain hope of seeing realized the proud dream of all her life. Rodolphe was interested for this unfortunate creature, had protected without knowing her, what would be his joy when he discovered her to be his *child!* He was free, the countess a widow—Sarah already saw glisten before her eyes a sovereign's crown. La Chouette, still advancing with cautious steps, had already reached one end of the table, and placed her dagger perpendicularly in her basket, the handle close to the opening, quite ready. She was only a few steps from the countess, when the latter suddenly said, "Do you know how to write?" And pushing back with her hand the boxes and jewels, she opened a blotter placed before an inkstand. "No, madame, I cannot write," answered La Chouette at all hazard. "I am going to write, then, from your dictation. Tell me all the circumstances attending the abandonment of this little girl." And Sarah, seated herself in an arm chair before the desk, took a pen, and made a motion for the old woman to draw near to her.

The eyes of La Chouette twinkled. At length, she was standing erect alongside of Sarah's seat. She, bending over the table, prepared to write. "I will read aloud slowly," said the countess, "you will correct my mistakes." "Yes, madame," answered La Chouette, watching every movement. Then she slipped her right hand into her basket, so as to take hold of the dagger without being seen. The countess began to write—"I declare that—"

But interrupting herself, and turning towards La Chouette, who already had hold of the handle of her dagger, Sarah added, "At what time was this child delivered to you?" "In the month of February, 1827." "And by whom?" asked Sarah, with her face still turned towards La Chouette. "By Pierre Tournemine, now in the galleys at Rochefort. Madame Seraphin, housekeeper of the notary, gave the little girl to him." The countess turned to write, and read in a loud voice, "I declare that, in the month of February, 1827, the named—"

La Chouette had drawn the dagger. Already she raised it to strike her victim between the shoulders. Sarah again turned. La Chouette, not to be discovered, placed quickly her right arm on the back of the chair, and leaned towards her to answer her new question. "I have forgotten the name of the man who confided the child to you." "Pierre Tournemine," answered La

Chouette. "Pierre Tournemine," repeated Sarah, continuing to write, "now in the galleys at Rochefort, placed in my hands a child who had been confided to him by the housekeeper of—"

The countess could not finish. La Chouette, after having softly disencumbered herself of the basket by dropping it on the ground, had thrown herself on the countess with as much rapidity as fury; with her left hand she caught her by the throat, and, holding her face down to the table, she had, with the right hand, planted the dagger between the shoulders. This horrid deed was executed so quickly, that the countess did not utter a single cry or groan. Still seated, she remained with her face on the table. The pen had fallen from her hand.

"The same blow as Fourline's, the little old man of the Rue du Roule," said the monster. "Another one who will talk no more; her account is made." And La Chouette, gathering in haste the jewels, which she threw into her basket, did not perceive that her victim still breathed. The murder and robbery accomplished, the horrible old woman opened the glass door, disappeared rapidly in the green alley, went out by the small door, and reached the waste ground. Near the observatory she took a hack, which conveyed her to Bras-Rouge's. The widow Martial, Nicolas, Calebasse, and Barbillon, had, as the reader knows, given a rendezvous to La Chouette in this den, to rob and kill the diamond broker.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE AGENT OF POLICE.

The reader is already acquainted with the tavern of the Bleeding Heart, situated in the Champs Elysées, near the Cours la Reine, in one of the vast moats which bounded this promenade some years since. The inhabitants of the island had not yet appeared. Since the departure of M. Bradamanté, who had accompanied the step-mother of Madame d'Harville to Normandy, Tortillard had returned to his father's house.

Placed as sentinel on the top of the staircase, the little cripple was to notify the arrival of Martial by a concerted signal, Bras-Rouge being then in secret conference with an agent of police, named Narcisse Borel, who, it will be remembered, was seen at the tapis-franc of the Ogresse, when he came there

to arrest two villains accused of murder. This agent, a man of about forty years, strong and thick set, had his skin stained, a sharp and piercing eye, and face completely shaved, so as to be able to assume the different disguises necessary to his dangerous expeditions; for it was often necessary for him to unite the sudden transformations of a comedian with the energy and courage of a soldier, to surprise certain banditti whom he was obliged to match in courage and determination. Narcisse Borel was, in a word, one of the most useful, most active instruments of Providence, on a small scale, vulgarly called the police.

* * * * * *

Let us return to the interview between Borel and Bras-Rouge. Their conversation seemed very animated. "Yes," said the agent, "you are accused of profiting by your position in a double manner, by taking part with impunity in the robberies of a band of very dangerous malefactors, and of giving false information concerning them to the police. Take care, Bras-Rouge; if this should be proved, they would have no mercy on you." "Alas! I know I am accused of this; and it is afflicting, my good Narcisse," replied Bras-Rouge, giving to his weasel face an expression of hypocritical sorrow. "But I hope to-day they will render me justice, and that my good faith will be certainly ackowledged." "We shall see." "How can I be suspected? Have I not given proofs? Is it not I —yes or no—who, in time past, caused you to arrest, in the very act, Ambrose Martial, one of the most dangerous malefactors in Paris?" "All this is very fine, but Ambrose Martial was informed that he was about to be arrested; if I had not advanced the hour indicated by you, he would have escaped." "Do you believe me capable, Narcisse, of having secretly given him information of your intentions?" "All I know is, that I received a pistol-shot from the brigand, which, very fortunately, only went through my arm." "Marry! Narcisse, it is very certain that, in your calling, one is exposed to such mistakes." "Ah! do you call that a mistake?" "Certainly; for, doubtless, he wished, the scoundrel, to plant the ball in your body." "In the arms, or the body, or in the head, no matter; it is not that I complain; every trade has its disagreements." "And its pleasures also, Nar-

cisse. For example, when a man as cunning, as adroit, as courageous as you are, is for a long time on the tracks of a nest of robbers; follows them from place to place, from house to house, with a good blood-hound like your servant Bras-Rouge, and he succeeds in getting them into a mouse-trap, from which not one can escape, acknowledge that there is a great pleasure in it—a huntsman's joy—without counting the service rendered to justice," added he. "I should be of your opinion, if the blood-hound was faithful, but I am afraid he is not." "Ah, Narcisse, you think—" "I think, that instead of putting us on the scent, you amuse yourself by deceiving us, and that you abuse the confidence placed in you. Every day you promise to aid us to place our hands on the band; this day never comes." "And if this day comes to-day, Narcisse, as I am sure it will; and if I cause you to pick up Barbillon, Nicolas Martial, the widow, her daughter, and La Chouette, will it be, yes or no, a good haul? Will you still suspect me?" "No; and you will have rendered a real service; for we have against this band strong presumptions, almost certain suspicions, but, unfortunately, no proofs."

"Hold a moment—caught in the very act, allowing you do nab them so, will aid furiously to display their cards, Narcisse?" "Doubtless; and you assure me there has been no provocation on your part in the affair they have on hand?" "No, on my honour! It is La Chouette who came and proposed to me to entice the broker here, when this infernal woman learned, through my son, that Morel, the lapidary, who lived in the Rue du Temple, worked in real instead of false stones, and that mother Mathieu had often about her jewels of value. I accepted the affair, proposing to La Chouette to add Barbillon and the Martials, so as to have the whole gang in hand."

"And the Brigand; this man so dangerous, so strong, and so ferocious, who was always with La Chouette? one of the ring-leaders of the tapis-franc?" "The Brigand?" said Bras-Rouge, feigning astonishment. "Yes, a galley-slave escaped from Rochefort, named Anselmo Duresnel, condemned for life. It is known now that he has disfigured himself so as not to be recognised. Have you no information of him?" "None," answered Bras-Rouge, intrepidly, who had his reasons for this falsehood, for the Brigand was then shut up in one of th e cellars of his own tavern.

"There is every reason to believe that the Brigand is the author of some new murders. It would be an important capture. For six weeks past, no one knows what has become of him."

"Thus we are reproached for having lost sight of him. Always reproached, Narcisse!" "Not without reason. And the smuggling?" "Must I not know all sorts of folks, smugglers as well as any body else, to put you on the scent? I informed you of this pipe to introduce liquors; begining outside of the Barrier du Trone and ending in a house in the 'rue******.'" "I know all that," said Narcisse, interrupting Bras-Rouge; "but for one you denounce, you let perhaps ten escape, and you continue your trade with impunity. I am sure you feed out of two mangers, as the saying is."

"Ah! Narcisse, I am incapable of such dishonest hunger." "And this is not all. In the Rue du Temple, No. 17, lives the woman called Burette pawnbroker, who is accused of being your receiver." "What would you have me do, Narcisse? one says so many things, the world is so wicked—once more I say, I must mix with the greatest number of scoundrels possible. I must even do as they do, worse than they, to avoid suspicion: but it cuts me to the heart to imitate them—I must be well devoted to the service, to follow such a trade." "Poor dear man! I pity you with all my heart."

"You laugh, Narcisse. But if all these stories are believed, why do they not pay Burette and myself a visit?" "You know well enough—not to startle these bandits whom you have for so long a time promised to deliver to us." "And I am going to deliver them to you, Narcisse; in one hour's time you shall have them bound, and without much trouble, for there are three women. As to Barbillon and Nicolas Martial, they are as ferocious as tigers, but cowardly as chickens." "Tigers or chickens," said Narcisse, opening his long riding coat and showing the butt-end of two pistols, which stuck out of the pockets of his pantaloons, "I have something here to serve them." "You will do well to take two of your men with you, Narcisse: when they find themselves concerned, the greatest cowards become sometimes tigers." "I will place two of my men in the lower room, alongside the one where you will put the broker. At the first cry, I will appear at one door, my two men at the other."

"You must make haste, for the band may arrive every mo-

ment, Narcisse." "So be it; I go to place my men. I hope it will not be for nothing this time."

The conversation was interrupted by the concerted signal. Bras-Rouge looked out of a window to see who Tortillard announced.

"Look! here is La Chouette already! Well! do you believe me now Narcisse?" "This is something, but it is not all; in fine, we shall see. I go to place my men." And the agent disappeared through a side door.

CHAPTER IX.

LA CHOUETTE.

The rapidity of the step of La Chouette, the ferocious ardour of a desire for rapine and murder which she still possessed, had flushed her hideous visage; her green eye sparkled with savage joy.

Tortillard followed her, jumping and limping. Just as she was descending the last steps of the stairs, the son of Bras Rouge, through a wicked frolic placed his foot on the trailing folds of La Chouette's dress. This caused the old woman to stumble: not being able to catch hold of the balusters, she fell on her knees, her hands both stretched out, abandoning her precious "basket," from whence escaped a golden bracelet set with diamonds and fine pearls. La Chouette, having, in her fall, excoriated her fingers a little, picked up the bracelet, which had not escaped the quick eyesight of Tortillard, rose up, and threw herself furiously on the little cripple, who approached her with a hypocritical air, saying, "Ah! my God! your foot slipped?"

Without answering, La Chouette seized him by the hair, and, stooping down, bit him in the cheek; the blood spirted from the wound. Strange as it may appear, Tortillard, notwithstanding his wickedness, and the great pain he endured, uttered not a complaint nor cry. He wiped his bleeding face, and said, with a forced laugh.

"I would rather you would not kiss me so hard another time, eh! La Chouette." "Wicked little devil, why did you step on my gown to make me fall?" "I? Ah, well! 'par example,' I swear to you that I did not do it on purpose, my good Chouette; as if your Tortillard would wish to hurt you; he loves you too well

Assassination of the Countess

for that. You did well to beat him, affront him, bite him; he is attached to you like the poor little dog is attached to his master," said the child, in a caressing and coaxing voice." Deceived by the hypocrisy of Tortillard, La Chouette answered, "Very well! If I have bitten you wrongfully, it shall be punishment for some other time, when you have deserved it, brigand. Come, to-day I bear no malice. Where is your cheat of a father?" "In the house, shall I go and call him?" "No. The Martials, have they come yet?" "Not yet." "Then I have time to go and see Fourline; I want to speak to old *No-eyes*." "Are you going to the cellar of the brigand?" asked Tortillard, hardly concealing his diabolical joy. "What is that to you?" "To me?" "Yes; you asked me in such a droll way." "Because I thought of something funny," "What?" "That you must have brought a pack of cards along to amuse him," answered Tortillard, in a cunning manner; "it will be a little change for him; he only plays at biting with the rats; that game he always wins, and in the end it tires him."

La Chouette laughed violently at this witticism, and said to the little cripple, "Mamma's little monkey. I do not know any one more wicked than you are. You little rogue go and get me a candle; you shall light me down to see Fourline, and you shall help me to open his door; you know that I can't move it alone." "Ah! well, no, it is too dark in the cellar," said Tortillard, shaking his head. "How? you, who are as wicked as the devil, you a coward? I would like to see that—come, go quick, and say to your father I will soon return; that I am with Fourline; that we are talking about the publication of our banns of marriage—eh!" added the monster chuckling. "Come, make haste, you shall be groomsman, and if you are a good boy, you shall have my garter." Tortillard went to get a light, and La Chouette, elated with the success of her robbery, amused herself, while he was gone, in handling the precious jewels in her basket. It was to conceal temporarily this treasure that she wished to visit the Maitre d'Ecole in his cellar, and not to torment, as was her usual custom, her new victim.

Tortillard, holding a light, reappeared at the door of the cavern. La Chouette followed him to the lower room, into which opened the large trap-door already described. The son of Bras-Rouge, protecting his light with the hollow of his hand, and pre-

ceding the old woman, descended slowly a flight of steep stone steps leading to the entrance of the cellar which had so nearly been the tomb of Rodolphe. Arrived at the foot, Tortillard appeared to hesitate about following La Chouette. "Well! wicked '*lambkin*,' go on then" said she, turning round. "Dame! it is so dark, and, besides, you go so fast, La Chouette; but stop, I'd rather go back, and leave you the candle." "And the door of the cellar, imbecile? Can I open it alone? Will you go on?" "No, I am too much afraid." "If I come to you, take care." "Since you threaten me, I'll go back." And he retreated a few steps. "Well! listen: be a good boy," answered La Chouette, restraining her anger; "I will give you something." "Very well," said the boy, drawing near: "speak so to me, and you will make me do all you can wish, mother La Chouette." "Advance, I am in a hurry." "Yes, but promise that you will let me 'torment' the brigand?" "Some other day: now I have not the, time." "Only a little; just to make him foam." "Some other time, I say; I must return at once." "Why, then, do you open the door of his prison?" "None of your business. Come, now, will you finish? The Martials perhaps are already above, I want to speak to them. Be a good boy, and you shan't be sorry; go on." "I must love you well, La Chouette, you make me do just as you please," said Tortillard, advancing slowly. The trembling, sickly light of the candle, only made darkness visible in this gloomy passage, reflecting the black shadow of this hideous child on the green and crumbling walls, streaming with humidity. At the end of the passage, through the obscurity, could be perceived the low broken arch of the entrance to the cellar, its heavy door secured with bands of iron, and contrasting strongly in the shade, with the plaid shawl and white bonnet of La Chouette.

With their united efforts, the door opened, creaking on its rusty hinges. A puff of humid vapour escaped from this hole, which was as dark as night. The candle placed on the ground, cast a ray of light on the first steps of the stone staircase, while the lower part was lost in total obscurity. A cry, or rather a savage howl came up from the depths of the cellar. "Ah! there is Fourline," said La Chouette, and she descended a few steps to conceal her jewels, in some corner. "I am hungry!" cried the brigand, in a voice trembling with rage; "do you, then, wish me to die here like a mad beast?" "You are hungry, poor puss?"

cried La Chouette, shouting with laughter, "Well! suck your thumb." The noise of a chain shaken violently was heard; then a sigh of restrained rage. "Take care! you will hurt your leg as you did at the farm of Bouqueval, poor dear papa!" said Tortillard. "The child is right; keep quiet, Fourline," said the old woman; "the chain and rings are strong, old *No-eyes;* it comes from Micou, who only sells first-rate articles. It is your own fault; for why did you allow yourself to be tied when you were asleep? afterward, there was nothing to be done but to slip on the chain, and bring you down here, in this nice cool place, to preserve you, old beau." "It's a shame—he'll grow mouldy," said Tortillard.

The chains were heard rattling anew. "Eh! eh! Fourline jumps like a June bug tied by the paw," cried the old woman; "I think I can see him." "June bug! stole! stole! Your husband's the brigand," chanted Tortillard. This variation augmented the hilarity of La Chouette. Having placed her basket in a hole under one of the steps, she said, "Do you see, Fourline?" "He does not see," answered Tortillard. "The boy is right. Ah, well! Do you hear, Fourline? you should not have hindered me, when we returned from the farm, from washing Pegriotte's face with vitriol. You should not have played the good dog, simpleton. And then to talk of your conscience, which was becoming prudish. I saw that you were becoming sour, that is turning honest, as they say to a spy, that some day or other you might inform against us, old *No-eyes;* and then—"

"The old No-eyes is about to eat you, La Chouette, for he is hungry," said Tortillard, suddenly pushing, with all his strength, the old woman by the back. La Chouette fell forward, uttering a a dreadful imprecation, and rolled to the foot of the steps. La Chouette is yours! jump on her, old man," added Tortillard. Then seizing hold of the basket, which he had seen the old woman hide, he ran up the stairs precipitately, crying with savage joy, "There is a push worth double of what I gave you a while ago, La Chouette! this time you shall not bite me. Ah! you thought I didn't care; thank you, I bleed still.

"I have her, oh, I have her!" cried the brigand, from the bottom of the cellar. "If you have her, old man, fair play," said the boy, chuckling; and he stopped on the last step of the staircase. "Help!" cried La Chouette, in a strangled voice. "Thank

you, Tortillard," answered the Brigand, "thank you;" and he uttered an aspiration of fearful joy. "Oh! I pardon you the harm you have done me, and to reward you, you shall hear La Chouette sing! Listen well; the bird of death—" "Bravo, bravo! here I am in the dress circle, private box," said Tortillard, seating himself at the top of the stairs.

CHAPTER X.

THE CELLAR.

Tortillard, seated on the first step, raised the light to endeavour to see what was going on in the cellar, but the darkness was too great; so faint a light could not dissipate it. The son of Bras-Rouge could distinguish nothing. The struggle between the Brigand and La Chouette was silent and furious, without a word, without a cry. Only from time to time could be heard a hard breathing or suffocating respiration, which always accompanies violent and continued struggles. Tortillard, seated on the stone step, began to stamp his feet in the manner peculiar to spectators anxious for the commencement of a play; then he uttered the familiar cry of the occupants of the *paradise* of the theatres on the Boulevards, "Eh! the curtain! Begin, begin, Music! music!" "Oh! I have you as I wish," murmured the brigand from the bottom of the cellar, "and you shall—" A desperate movement of La Chouette interrupted him. She struggled with that energy which is caused by the fear of death. "Louder! We can't hear," cried Tortillard. "You have a fine chance at my hand. I have you as I wish to have you," continued the brigand. Then, having doubtless succeeded in holding La Chouette, he added, "That's it. Now listen—" "Tortillard call your father!" cried La Chouette, in a breathless, exhausted tone. "Help! help!" "Turn out that old woman! turn her out! We can't hear!" said the little cripple, screaming with laughter. "Silence! out with her!" The cries of La Chouette could not reach the upper apartments. The wretch seeing that she had no aid to expect from the son of Bras-Rouge, tried a last effort.

Tortillard, go for help;" and I will give you my basket, it is full of jewels. It is there under a stone." "How generous you are! Thank you, madame! Don't you know that I have it? Hold! don't you hear it jingle?" said Tortillard, shaking it. "But, you must

give me two sous to buy some hot cake, and I'll go seek papa!" "Have pity on me, and I—" La Chouette could not proceed. Again there was a pause. The little cripple recommenced the stamping of his feet, and cried, "Why don't you begin? Oh! the curtain! begin! begin! Music! music!"

"In this manner La Chouette, you can no longer deafen me with your cries," said the brigand, after some minutes, during which he had succeeded in gagging the old woman. "You know well," resumed he, in a slow and hollow tone, "that I do not wish to finish at once. Torture for torture. You have made me suffer enough. I must talk to you a long time before I kill you—yes, a long time. It will be frightful to you! What agony!"

"Ah! none of your nonsense; eh, old man," cried Tortillard, half rising "Correct her; but do not hurt her. You speak of killing her; its only a joke, is it not? I hold to my Chouette. I have lent her to you, but you will return her to me. Don't damage her. I will not have any one harm my Chouette, or I will go and call papa." "Be not alarmed; she shall only have what she deserves—a profitable lesson," said the brigand to reassure Tortillard, fearing the little cripple would go for help.

"Very good: bravo! Now the play begins," said the son of Bras-Rouge, who did not believe that the brigand seriously meditated to destroy La Chouette. "Let us talk a little," resumed the brigand in a calm voice, to the old woman. "In the first place, since the dream I had at the farm of Bouqueval, which brought before my eyes all my crimes, since this dream, which almost made me mad, which will make me mad—for in the solitude, the profound state of isolation in which I live, all my thoughts, in spite of myself, tend towards this dream—a change has taken place within me. Yes, I have thought with horror of my past wickedness. In the first place, I did not allow you to disfigure the Goualeuse. That was nothing. In chaining me here in this cave, in making me suffer cold and hunger, but in delivering me from your provocation, you have left me alone, to all the horrors of my thoughts. Oh! you do not know what it is to be alone, always alone, with a black veil over one's eyes, as the implacable man said who punished me. It is fearful. See now; It is in this cellar that I wished to kill him, and this cellar is the place of my punishment. It will be perhaps my tomb.

"I repeat to you, this is frightful. All that this man predicted

is realized. He told me: 'You have abused our strength: your shall be the sport, the plaything of the weakest.' This has been. He told me: 'Henceforth, separated from the exterior world, face to face with the external remembrance of your crimes, one day you will repent them.' And this day has arrived; solitude has confirmed it. I could not have thought it possible. Another proof that I am, perhaps, less wicked than formerly, is, that I experience an indescribable joy in holding you there, monster not to avenge myself but to avenge our victims. Yes, I shall have accomplished a duty, when, with my own hand I shall have punished my accomplice. A voice tells me, that if you had fallen into my power, much blood—much blood might have been spared. I feel now a horror of my past murders, and yet is it not strange? it is without fear, it is with security that I intend to execute on you a frightful murder, with horrible refinement of cruelty. Speak! speak! can you realize this?" "Bravo, bravo; well played, old *No-eyes*. You warm up," cried Tortillard, applauding.

"All this is only a joke." "Only a joke," answered the brigand in a hollow voice. "Hold still, then, La Chouette; I must finish explaining to you how, little by little, I came to repent. This revelation will be odious to you, heart of iron, and it will also prove to you how merciless I ought to be in the vengeance I wish to exercise on you in the name of our victims. I must hurry on. The joy of having you thus makes my blood run wild, my head throbs with violence, as when I think of my dream. My mind wanders; perhaps one of my attacks is coming on; but I shall have time to render the approaches of death more frightful, in forcing you to hear me." "Bold, La Chouette:" cried Tortillard; "be bold with your answer. Don't you know your part? come tell the devil to prompt you, my old dear." "Oh! you do well to struggle and bite," said the brigand, after a pause; "you shall not escape; you have cut my fingers to the bone but I will tear your tongue out if you stir.

"Let us continue to converse. On finding myself alone,—constantly alone in obscurity and silence, I begun to have fits of furious rage; powerless, for the first time I lost my senses, my head wandered. Yes, although awake, I have dreamed the dream—you know, the dream. The little old man of the Rue de Roule—the woman drowned—the cattle merchant—and you! soaring above all these phantoms! I tell you, all this is frightful. I am

blind; and my thoughts assume a form, a body, and represent continually to me, in a visible manner, almost palpable, the features of my victim. I should not have this fearful dream, but that my mind, continually absorbed by the recollection of my past crimes, is troubled with the same visions. Doubtless, when one is deprived of sight, besetting ideas trace themselves almost materially on the brain. Yet, sometimes, by force of contemplating them with resigned alarm, it seems to me that these menacing spectres have pity on me; they grow dim, fade away, and disappear. Then I think that I awake from a vivid dream; but I feel myself weak, exhausted, broken, and, do you believe it—oh, how you will laugh, La Chouette;—I weep—do you hear? I weep. You do not laugh: But laugh! I say laugh." La Chouette uttered a stifled groan. "Louder" cried Tortillard; "can't hear." "Yes," continued the brigand, "I wept, for I suffered, and rage is fruitless. I say to myself, To-morrow, and to-morrow, for ever I shall be a prey to the same delirium, the same mournful desolation. What a life, oh, what a life!

"And I have not chosen death, rather than to be interred alive in this abyss, which incessantly racks my thoughts. Blind, solitary, and a prisoner! what can distract my thoughts? Nothing—nothing." "When the phantoms cease for a moment to pass and repass on the black veil which I have before my eyes, there are other tortures—there are overwhelming comparisons. I say to myself, 'If I had remained an honest man, at this moment I should be free, tranquil, happy, loved, and honoured by mine own, instead of being blind and chained in this dungeon, at the mercy of my accomplices.' Alas! the regret of happiness lost by crime is the first step towards repentance. And when to this repentance is added an expiation of frightful severity—an expiation which changes your life into a long sleep filled with avenging hallucinations or desperate reflections, perhaps, then, the pardon of man will follow remorse and expiation."

"Take care, old man," cried Tortillard; "you are stealing from the part of M. Moessard. Found out! found out!" The brigand paid no attention to the son of Bras-Rouge.

"Does it astonish you to hear me talk thus, La Chouette? If I had continued to harden myself, either by other bloody misdeeds, or by the savage drunkenness of a galley-slave's life, this salutary change in me had never taken place, I know well. But *alone*—

blind—and tortured with a remorse which was *visible*, what could I think of? new crimes—how could I commit them? An escape —how escape? And if I escaped, where should I go; what should I do with my liberty? No; I must henceforth live an eternal night, between the anguish of repentance and the alarm of horrifying apparitions by which I am pursued. Yet sometimes a feeble ray of hope shines in the midst of the gloom; a moment of calm succeeds to my torments; yes, for sometimes I succeed in conjuring the spectres which beseige me, by opposing to them the recollections of a past life, honest and peaceful—by carrying back my thoughts to the days of my childhood. Happily, you see, the greatest villains have had, at least, some years of peace and innocence to offer in opposition to their long years of crime and blood. We are not born wicked. The most perverse have had the amiable simplicity of childhood— have known the sweet joys of that charming age. Thus, I repeat, sometimes I feel a bitter consolation in saying, I am at this moment the object of universal execration; but there was a time when I was beloved, protected, because I was inoffensive and good. Alas! I must take refuge in the past, when I can; there alone can I find any repose." On pronouncing these last words, the voice of the brigand had lost its acuteness; this formidable man seemed profoundly affected; he went on, "Now, you see, the salutary influence of these thoughts is such that my rage is appeased; courage, strength, the will, all fail me to punish you: no, it is not for me to shed your blood." "Bravo! old one. Now you see, La Chouette, that it was only a joke," cried Tortillard, applauding.

"No, it is not for me to shed your blood," resumed the brigand, "it would be a murder—excusable, perhaps, but still a murder: and I have enough with three spectres. And then, who knows? you! perhaps, you! will repent some day." On speaking thus, the brigand had mechanically relaxed his grasp. La Chouette profited by it to seize hold of the dagger which she had placed in her bosom after the murder of Sarah, and to strike a violent blow with it in order to disembarrass herself of him altogether. He uttered a cry of great anguish. The savage phrensy of his rage, his vengeance, his hatred, his sanguinary instincts suddenly aroused, and exasperated at this attack, made an unexpected and terrible explosion, under which his reason sunk, already shattered by so many trials.

"Ah! viper, I have felt your tooth!" cried he, in a voice trembling with rage, and grasping La Chouette tightly, who had thought to escape. "You crawl in the cellar," added he, more and more wandering, "but I am going to crush you, viper. You waited, doubtless, the coming of the phantoms; my ears tingle, my head turns, as when they are about to come. Yes, I am not deceived. Oh! there they are; out of the darkness they approach —How pale they are, and their blood, how it flows, red and smoking. This frightens you—you struggle. Ah, well, be tranquil, you shall not see them; I have pity on you; I shall make you blind. You shall be like me, *without eyes.*" Here he paused.

La Chouette uttered a cry so horrible that Tortillard, alarmed, jumped from his seat, and stood erect. The frightful cries of La Chouette seemed to increase the insanity of the Brigand. "Sing," said he in a low voice, "sing, La Chouette, sing your song of death. You are happy; you will never more see the phantoms of our victims; the old man of the Rue de la Roule, the drowned woman, the cattle merchant. But I see them; they come; they touch me. Oh! how cold they are, oh!"

The last spark of intelligence in this poor wretch was extinguished in this cry of horror. Then he reasoned no more, spoke not; he behaved and roared like a wild beast: he only obeyed the savage instinct of destruction for destruction. Horrible, frightful events took place in the gloom of the cellar.

A quick, rapid trampling was heard, interrupted at frequent intervals by a dull sound, like that of a box of bones which rebounded on a stone against which one wished to break it. Acute moans, and bursts of infernal laughter, accompanied each of these blows. Then it was a death rattle of agony. Then nothing could be heard. Nothing, but the furious trampling; nothing, but the heavy and rebounding blows, which still continued.

Soon a distant noise of footsteps and voices reached even the depths of the cellar. Numerous lights appeared at the extremity of the subterranean passage. Tortillard, frozen with terror at the frightful tragedy which he had heard, but not seen, perceived several persons rapidly descend the staircase. In a moment the cellar was invaded by several police officers, at the head of whom was Borel; the municipal guards closed the march. Tortillard was seized on the upper steps of the cellar holding still in his hand the basket of La Chouette.

Borel, followed by some of his men, descended into the cellar of the brigand. All stopped, struck with such a horrible spectacle. Chained by the leg to an enormous stone placed in the middle of the dungeon, the brigand, horrible, monstrous, his hair knotted, his beard long, mouth foaming, clothed with bloody rags, turned like a wild beast around his dungeon, dragging after him, by the feet, the corpse of La Chouette, whose head was horribly mutilated, broken, and crushed. It needed a violent struggle to take from him the bleeding remains of his accomplice and to secure him. After a vigorous resistance, they succeeded in transporting him to the lower room of the tavern, a dull, gloomy apartment, lighted by a single window. There were found, with irons on their hands, and guarded, Barbillon, Nicolas Martial, his mother and sister. They had been arrested just at the moment they were dragging off the diamond broker to murder her. She was recovering herself in another room. Stretched on the ground, and held, with great difficulty, by two officers, the brigand slightly wounded in the arm by La Chouette, but completely insensible, roared and bellowed like a baited bull. At times he almost raised himself from the earth by his convulsive movements.

Barbillon, with head down, livid face, discoloured lips, fixed and savage eye, his long black hair falling on the collar of his blouse, torn in the struggle; Barbillon was seated on a bench; his arms confined by handcuffs, rested on his knees. The juvenile appearance of this scoundrel (he was hardly eighteen), and the regularity of his features, rendered still more deplorable the hideous stamp with which debauchery and crime had marked his countenance. Unmoved, he said not a word. It cannot be known whether this apparent insensibility was due to stupidity or to a feigned energy; his breathing was rapid, and from time to time with his shackled hands he wiped the sweat from his pale forehead.

Alongside of him was placed Calebasse; her cap had been torn; her yellowish hair, tied behind with a string, hung down her back in many tangled and disordered tresses. More enraged than dispirited, her thin and jaundiced cheeks somewhat coloured, she regarded with disdain the affliction of her brother Nicolas, placed on a chair opposite. Foreseeing the fate which awaited him, this bandit, sinking within himself, his head hanging, his

knees trembling, was almost dead with affright; his teeth chattered convulsively, and he uttered low and mournful groans.

Alone, among all, the widow Martial, standing with her back to the wall, she lost nothing of her audacity. With her head erect, she cast a firm look around her. This masque of bronze betrayed not the slightest emotion. Yet, at the sight of Bras-Rouge, who was brought into the lower room, after having assisted in the minute search which the commissary had just made throughout the whole house—yet, at the sight of Bras-Rouge, we repeat, the features of the widow contracted in spite of herself; her small eyes, ordinarily dull, sparkled with rage, her compressed lips became bloodless, she stiffened her manacled hands. Then, as if she had regretted this mute manifestation of rage and impotent hatred, she conquered her emotion, and became of an icy calmness. While the commissary made his '*proces verbal*,' Narcisse Borel, rubbing his hands, cast a complacent look on the important capture he had just made, and which delivered Paris from a band of dangerous criminals; but feeling of what utility Bras-Rouge had been in this expedition, he could not prevent himself from expressing to him by a glance his gratitude.

The father of Tortillard was obliged to partake, until after their judgment, the prison and fate of those whom he had denounced; like them, he wore handcuffs; still more than them, he had a trembling, alarmed air, uttering sorrowful groans, and giving to his weasel face every expression of terror. He embraced Tortillard, as if he sought some consolation in these paternal caresses. The little cripple showed but little sensibility at these proofs of tenderness; he had just learned that, until farther orders, he was to be sent to the prison for young offenders. "What a misfortune to part with my darling son!" cried Bras-Rouge, feigning to weep; "it is we who are the most unfortunate, Martial, for they separate us from our children." The widow could no longer contain herself; not doubting the treason of Bras-Rouge, which she had prophesied, she cried, "I was sure that you had sold my son who is at Toulon. Hold, Judas!" and she spat in his face. "You sell our heads; so be it! they will see handsome corpses—corpses of the real Martial!" "Yes; we will not budge before the scaffold," added Calebasse, with savage pride. The widow, pointing to Nicolas with a withering glance of contempt, said to her daughter, "This coward will dishonour us on the scaffold!"

Some moments afterward, the widow and Calebasse, accompanied by two agents of police, were placed in a hack and sent to Saint Lazare. The three men were conducted to La Force. The brigand was transported to the depôt of the Conciergerie, where there are cells destined to receive temporarily the insane.

CHAPTER XI.

PRESENTATION.

Some days after the murder of Madame Seraphin, the death of La Chouette, and the arrest of the band of malefactors surprised at the house of Bras-Rouge, Rodolphe repaired to the house in the Rue du Temple.

We have said that—intending to overcome cunning by cunning, and to expose the concealed crimes of Ferrand to the punishment they merited, notwithstanding the address and hypocrisy with which he disguised them—Rodolphe had caused to be brought from her prison in Germany, a Creole, the unworthy wife of the negro David. Having arrived the evening previous, this creature as handsome as she was perverted, as enchanting as she was dangerous, had received detailed instructions from the Baron de Graün.

"In the last interview between Rodolphe and Madame Pipelet, the latter having adroitly proposed Cecily to Madame Seraphin to replace Louise Morel as servant to the notary, the housekeeper had willingly received her overtures, and promised to speak on the subject to Ferrand, which she had done in terms the most favourable to Cecily, the very same morning of the day on which she (Seraphin) had been drowned at the island of the Ravageur. Rodolphe came there to know the result of the *presentation* of Cecily.

To his great astonishment, on entering the lodge, he found, although it was eleven o'clock in the morning, Pipelet in bed, and Anastasia standing beside him, offering him a drink. Alfred, whose forehead and eyes disappeared under a formidable cotton cap, not answering Anastasia, she concluded he was asleep, and closed the curtains of the bed. On turning she saw Rodolphe. Immediately she carried, according to custom, the back of her left hand flat against her periwig.

"Your servant, my prince of lodgers. You find me overturn-

ed, amazed, grown thin. There are famous doings in the house. Without counting that Alfred has been in bed since yesterday." "And what is the matter?" "Is that to be asked?" "How?" "Always the same number. The monster yearns more and more after Alfred; he alarms me so that I do not know what to do."

"Cabrion again?" "Again." "It is the devil, then!" "I shall begin to think so, M. Rodolphe; for this rogue always guesses when I am out. Hardly do I turn on my heels, than 'crack' he is here on the back of my old man, who does not know how to defend himself any more than a child. Yesterday, again, while I was gone to Ferrand's, the notary—there is the place to hear news—"

"And Cecily?" said Rodolphe hastily. "I came to know—"

"Stop, my prince of lodgers; do not fluster me. I have so many things to tell you, that I shall lose myself if you break my thread." "Come, I listen." "In the first place, as concerns this house: just imagine that yesterday they came and arrested 'Mother Burette.'" "The pawnbroker on the second floor?" "Yes. It appears that she had many droll trades besides that of a pawnbroker! She was a thief-receiver, coiner, furniture broker, &c. The worst of all is, that her old beau, Bras-Rouge, is also arrested. I told you there was a real earthquake in the house."

"What! Bras-Rouge also arrested?" "Yes; in his tavern in the champs Elysées. All are housed, even to his son Tortillard, the wicked little cripple. They say there has been a whole heap of murderers there; that they were a band of assassins; that La Chouette one of the friends of Burette, has been strangled; and that, if help had not arrived in time, Mathieu, the diamond-broker, would have been murdered. Ain't this news?"

"Bras-Rouge arrested! La Chouette dead!" said Rodolphe to himself, with astonishment. "Poor Fleur de Marie is at least avenged."

"So much for this. Without excepting the new infamy of Cabrion, I am going at once to finish with that brigand. You will see what impudence! When Burette was arrested, and we knew that Bras-Rouge, our principal tenant, was entrapped, I said to my old darling, 'You must trot right off to the proprietor, and tell him that Bras-Rouge is locked up.' Alfred set out. At the end of two hours he came back to me, but in such a state—white as a sheet, and blowing like an ox!" "What was the matter?"

"You shall see, Rodolphe. Figure to yourself that, at six steps from this, there is a large white wall: what does he see written there with charcoal, in large letters? 'Pipelet—Cabrion!' the two names joined by a large mark of union. It is this mark of *union* with this scoundrel which sticks in his stomach the most, my old darling. Good, that began to upset him; ten steps farther, what does he see on the great door of the Temple? 'Pipelet—Cabrion!' always with the sign of the union. On he goes; at each step he saw written these cursed names on the walls of the houses, on the doors, everywhere, *Pipelet—Cabrion!*' My old man began to see thirty-six candles; he thought every one was looking at him; he pulled his hat down to his nose, he was so much ashamed. He went on the Boulevard, thinking that this devil of a Cabrion had confined his indecencies to the Rue du Temple. Ah, well, yes! all along the Boulevard, at each place where there was room to write, always '*Pipelet—Cabrion,*' to the death! Finally, the poor dear man arrived at the proprietor's so bewildered, that, after having stuttered, stammered, and slabbered for a quarter of an hour, he could not understand one word of all that Alfred said; so he sent him back, calling him an old imbecile, and told him to send me to explain the thing. Good! Alfred retired, came back by another route, in order to avoid the names he had seen written on the walls. Ah, well, yes—"

"Pipelet and Cabrion again?" "As you say, my prince of lodgers. In this way the poor dear man arrived, stupified, amazed, wishing to exile himself. He told me his story; I calmed him as well as I could. I left him, and went with Cecily to the notary's. You think this is all? Oh, yes; hardly was my back turned, when this Cabrion, who had watched my departure, had the impudence to send here two great hussies, who put on Alfred's breeches. Stop! my hair stands on end—I will tell you all directly. Let us finish with the notary. I set out, in a coach with Cecily. She wore her pretty German peasant's costume, 'as she had just arrived, and had not time to change it,' so I was to tell Ferrand. You will believe me, if you please, my prince of lodgers, I have seen many pretty girls; I have seen myself in my spring-time; but never have I seen (myself included) a young person who could come within a hundred pike-staffs of Cecily. She has, above all, in the look of her large, wicked black eyes, something—in short, I don't know what it is; but, for sure, there is something striking.

What eyes! "But, hold, Alfred is not suspicious; well, the first time that she looked at him, he became as red as a carrot, this poor old man, and for nothing in the world; he would not have looked at her—he wriggled on his chair for an hour or two, as if he had been seated on a thorn; he told me afterward that the look of Cecily had recalled to his mind all the histories of that impudent Bradamanté about the savages, which made him blush so much, my old prude of an Alfred."

"But the notary?" "Here I am, Rodolphe. It was about seven o'clock in the evening when we reached the house of Ferrand: I told the porter to tell his master that Madame Pipelet was there with the servant whom Madame Seraphin had spoken about and told me to bring. Hereupon the porter uttered a sigh, and asked me if I knew what had happened to Madame Seraphin. I said no. Ah! Rodolphe, here is another earthquake." "What now?" "The Seraphin is drowned in an excursion to the country which she had made with one of her relations." "Drowned! A party to the country in winter?" said Rodolphe, surprised. "Oh, yes, drowned; as for me, it astonishes me more than it grieves me; for since the misfortune of poor Louise, whom she denounced, I hated her, the Seraphin. Thus, I said to myself, 'She is drowned, ah well; after all, it won't kill me.' That's my character." "And Ferrand?" "The porter at first said he thought I could not see his master, and begged me to wait in the lodge, but at the end of a moment he returned; we crossed the court, and entered a chamber in the rez-de-chausée. There was only a single candle burning. The notary was seated at the corner of the fire-place, where smoked the remains of a fire-brand. What a barrack! I had never seen Ferrand. Oh, isn't he horrid. Here is another one who might in vain have offered me the throne of Arabia to prove false to Alfred." "And did he appear struck with the beauty of Cecily?" "Can any one know, with his green spectacles? such an old sacristan ought to be no judge of women. Yet when we both entered, he made a kind of start from his chair; it was, doubtless, astonishment at seeing the Alsatian costume of Cecily; for she had (only ten million times better) the 'tournure' of one of those little broom-girls, with her short petticoats, and her pretty legs with blue stockings and red clogs; 'sacriste,' what calves! and such slender ancles! and the little foot; finally the notary had a bewildered look at seeing her." "It was doubtless the strange

costume which astonished him." "Must think so; but the funny moment drew near. Happily, I remembered the maxim you taught me, Rodolphe it was my safety."

"What maxim?" "You know: *It is enough that one wishes that the other should not wish, or that one should not wish that the other wishes.* Then I said to myself, I must rid my prince of lodgers of this German, in placing her with the master of Louise: and this is what I said to the notary, without giving him time to draw breath:

"'Pardon me if my niece comes dressed in the costume of her country; but she has just arrived; she has no other clothes than these, and I have no means of getting her others, as it would hardly be worth while; for we came only to thank you for having said to Madame Seraphin that you would consent to see Cecily, from the good recommendations I had given her; but I do not think she can suit.'" "Very well, Madame Pipelet." "'Why will your niece not suit me?' said the notary, who, seated in the chimney corner, seemed to look at us from under his spectacles. 'Because Cecily begins to be home-sick. She has only been here three days, yet she wishes to return, even if she has to beg her way back, and sell brooms like her countrywomen.' 'And you, who are her relation, will not suffer this?' 'I am her relation, it is true; but she is an orphan; she is twenty years old, and she is mistress of her own actions.' 'Bah! Bah! mistress of her own actions; at her age she should obey her relations,' answered he, roughly. Hereupon Cecily began to cry and tremble, pressing against me; it was the notary who made her afraid, very sure." "And Ferrand?" "He grumbled and muttered. 'Abandon a girl at her age is to wish to ruin her! To return to Germany as a beggar, fine resource! And you, her aunt, you allow such conduct?' Well! well! said I to myself, you'll walk alone. I'll place Cecily with you, or I'll lose my name. 'I am her aunt, it is true,' answered I, 'and it is a very unfortunate relationship for me; I have enough on my hands; I would be just as well pleased to have my niece go away as to have her on my hands. May the devil run away with such relations who send you such great girls as these without paying the carriage.' To crown all, there was Cecily, who seemed to be up to trap, bursting into tears. Thereupon, the notary assumed a snivelling tone like a preacher, and said to me:—'You will

have to account to God for the trust that Providence has placed in your hands; it would be a crime to expose this young girl to perdition. I consent to aid you in your charitable work, if your niece promises me to be industrious, honest, and pious, and, above all, never to go out. I will have pity on her, and take her into my service.' 'No, no; I would rather go back to my own country,' said Cecily, still weeping.' 'Her dangerous duplicity did not fail her," thought Rodolphe; the diabolical creature has, I see, perfectly comprised the orders of the Baron." Then the prince said aloud, "Did Ferrand appear vexed at the perverseness of Cecily?" 'Yes," he muttered between his teeth, and said to her hastily:—

'"It is not a question of what you prefer, but of what is suitable and decent. Heaven will not abandon you if you lead an honest life, and fulfil your religious duties. You will be here in a house as strict as it is holy; if your aunt really loves you, she will profit by my offer; at first you will have but small wages, but if by your conduct and zeal you deserve more, perhaps I will increase them.' Good! thought I to myself; the notary is caught! here is Cecily fixed at your house, old miser, old *no-heart!* The Seraphin was in your service for many years, and you have not even the appearance of remembering that she was drowned the day before yesterday. And I said aloud:—

'"Doubtless the place is advantageous, but if this young woman is home-sick?" 'That will pass away,' answered the notary; 'come, do you decide—yes, or no? If you consent, bring your niece to-morrow night at this hour, and she can enter at once into my service; my porter will instruct her. As to the wages, I commence by giving her twenty francs a month, with board and lodging.' 'Ah! sir, you'll add five francs more?' 'No; by-and-by, if I am content—we shall see. But I must inform you, that your niece must never go out, and you must have no one to come to see her.'

"'Eh! who would come to see her? she knows no one but me in Paris, and I have my lodge to take care of; it has incommoded me enough to come with her to day; you will never see me again; she will be as much of a stranger as if she had never come out of her own country. As to her not going out, there is a very simple remedy; let her wear her own costume; she would never dare go out in the streets dressed in that manner.' 'You

are right,' said the notary; it is, besides, respectable to dress in the costume of one's country. She shall, then, remain in her Alsatian dress.' 'Come,' said I to Cecily, who, with her head down, wept continually, 'you must decide, my child; a good place in an honest house, is not to be found every day; and, besides, if you refuse, make your own arrangements; I'll have no more to do with them.' Then Cecily answered, sighing, 'that she consented to remain, but on condition that if in a fortnight her homesickness troubled her too much she might go away.' 'I do not wish to keep you by force,' said the notary; 'and I am not embarrassed to find servants. Here is your advance; your aunt will only have to bring you to-morrow night.' Cecily had not ceased to weep. I accepted for her the advance of forty sous from the old screw, and we returned here." "Very well, Madame Pipelet; I do not forget to keep my word; here is what I promised if you should succeed in placing this girl, who embarrassed me." "Wait until to-morrow, my prince of lodgers," said madame Pipelet, refusing the money; "for, perhaps, he will change his mind when I take Cecily to him this evening." "I do not think that he will change his mind, but where is she?"

"In the cabinet belonging to the apartments of the commandant; in obedience to your orders, she does not stir from them; she seems as resigned as a lamb, although she has eyes; ah! what eyes! But, apropos of the commandant, isn't he an intriguer! When he came himself to superintend the packing of his furniture, did he not tell me that if there came any letters here addressed to a *Madame Vincent*, they were for him, and to send them to the *Rue Mondovi*, No. 5? He causes himself to be addressed under the name of a woman; the beautiful bird! how cunning he is! But this is not all: did he not have the impudence to ask me what had become of his wood? 'Your wood? why not your forest at once?' I answered. Now, it is true, for two mean cart-loads—one of drift, and the other of new wood, for he did not buy all new wood; the save-penny made such a fuss. His wood? 'I burned all your wood,' said I, 'to save your furniture from the damp; otherwise mushrooms would have sprung up on your embroidered cap, and on your glow-worm robe de chambre, that you wore so often to see the king of Prussia, while you were waiting for the little lady who quizzed you."

A heavy and plaintive groan from Alfred interrupted Madame

Pipelet. "There is the old man dreaming; he is going to wake up; you will allow me, my prince of lodgers?" "Certainly; I have, besides, some more questions to ask." "Well! dear, how do you feel?" said Madame Pipelet to her husband, opening the curtains; "here is Rodolphe; he knows the new infamy of Cabrion; he pities you with all his heart." "Ah!" said Alfred, turning his head in a languishing manner towards Rodolphe; "this time I shall not get over it; the monster has stabbed me to the heart. I am the subject of the placards of the capital; my name can be read on all the walls, side by side with this scoundrel's: *Pipelet—Cabrion*, with an enormous sign of union. I! united to this infernal blackguard, in the eyes of the capital of Europe." "Rodolphe knows it; but what he does not know is your adventure of last night with these two strapping women." "Ah! sir, he kept his most monstrous infamy for the last; this passed all bounds," said Alfred, in a mournful tone. "Come, my dear Pipelet, relate to me this new misfortune." "All he had done previously was nothing to this. He succeeded in his object —thanks to proceedings the most shameful. I do not know if I have the strength to relate it; confusion, shame, will impede me at each step."

Pipelet being painfully raised in the bed, modestly buttoned up his flannel waistcoat, and commenced in these *terms*: "My wife had just gone out; absorbed in the bitterness caused by the prostitution of my name written on all the walls of the capital; I sought to distract myself by endeavouring to work, but the boot, twenty times taken up was twenty times abandoned, thanks to the obstinate persecutions of my tormentor. I was seated before a table, when I saw the door of my lodge open, and a woman enter. This woman was wrapped in a cloak with a hood; I arose politely from my seat, and touched my hat. At this moment, a second woman, also enveloped in a cloak with a hood, entered my lodge, and locked the door inside.

"Although astonished at the familiarity of this procedure, and the silence which the two women preserved, I again rose from the chair, and again carried my hand to my hat. Then—no, no, I never can—my modesty revolts." "Come, old modesty, we are among men; go on, then." "Then," resumed Alfred, becoming crimson, "the mantles fell, and what did I see? Two species of sirens or nymphs, with no other clothing than a tunic of leaves,

the head also crowned with foliage; I was petrified. Then they both advanced towards me, extending their arms, as if to engage me to precipitate myself into them!" "The husseys!" said Anastasia. "The advances of these barefaced individuals revolted me," resumed Alfred, animated by a chaste indignation; "and, following this habit, which never abandons me in the most critical circumstances of my life, I remained completely immovable on my chair; then, profiting by my stupor, the two sirens approached me in a kind of slow movement, spinning round on their legs, and moving their arms. I became more and more immovable. They reached me; they twisted their arms around me." "Twisted their arms around an aged and married man! Ah! if I had been there, with the handle of my broom," cried Anastasia, "I'd have given you a cadence, and spinning of legs to some purpose." "When I felt myself embraced," continued Alfred, "my blood made one rush—I was half dead. Then one of the sirens—the boldest, a large tall blonde—leaned on my shoulder, raised my hat, and uncovered my head, always, in cadence, spinning on her legs and moving her arms: then her accomplice drew a pair of scissors from the leaves, collected together an enormous lock of all the hair that remained behind my head, and cut it off—all, all; continually spinning around on her legs; then she said to me, singing in cadence, 'It is for Cabrion!' and the other impudence repeated in chorus, 'It is for Cabrion! for Cabrion!'"

After a pause, accompanied by a grievous sigh, Alfred went on with his story:—

"During this scandalous spoliation, I raised my eyes, and saw looking through the window of the lodge, the infernal face of Cabrion, with his beard and pointed hat. He laughed; he was hideous! To escape this odious vision, I shut my eyes. When I opened them again, all had disappeared. I found myself on my chair, my head uncovered, and completely devastated! You see Cabrion has gained his end by force of cunning, audacity, and obstinacy; and by what means! He wished to make me pass for his friend; he began by putting up a notice here that we would carry on a friendly trade together. Not content with that, at this very moment my name is stuck with his on the walls of the capital, with an enormous sign of union. There is not, at this moment, an inhabitant of Paris who can have any doubt of my

intimacy with this wretch: he wished for some of my hair, he has got it; thanks to the impudent exactions of these brazen sirens. Now, you must see, there only remains for me to leave France; beloved France! where I thought to live and die." And Alfred threw himself backward on his bed, and clasped his hands.

"Just the contrary, old man, now that he has some of your hair he will leave you quiet." "Leave me quiet!" cried Pipelet, with a convulsive start; "but you do not know him; he is insatiable. Now, who knows what he will want from me?" Rigolette, appearing at the end of the lodge, put an end to the lamentations of Pipelet. "Do not enter, mademoiselle," cried Pipelet, faithful to his habits of chaste susceptibility. "I am in bed, and in my shirt." So saying, he drew one of the sheets to his chin. Rigolette stopped discreetly at the threshold. "I was just going to see you, neighbour," said Rodolphe to her. "Will you wait one moment?" Then, addressing Anastasia, "Do not forget to conduct Cecily to-night to Ferrand's."

"Be tranquil, my prince of lodgers; at seven o'clock she shall be installed there. Now that Madame Morel can walk, I will ask her to stay in the lodge, for Alfred would not, for an empire, remain alone."

CHAPTER XII.

THE TWO NEIGHBOURS.

The rosy cheeks of Rigolette became paler and paler; her charming face, until now so fresh, so round, began to lengthen a little; her piquant countenance, ordinarily so animated, so lively, was become serious and still more sad since the last interview between the grisette and Fleur de Marie at the gate of the prison of Saint Lazare.

"How happy I am to see you, my neighbour!" said she to Rodolphe, when he came out of the lodge. "I have many things to tell you." "In the first place, how do you do? Let me look at your pretty face. Is it always rosy and gay? Alas! no; I find you pale. I am sure you work too much." "Oh! no, Rodolphe; I assure you I am now used to this little increase of work. What changes me is grief. Yes! every time I see poor Germain I become still more sad." "He is, then, very much depressed?"

"More than ever, Rodolphe; and what is so annoying; everything that I do to console him increases his despondency; it is like a spell." And a tear came and obscured the large black eyes of Rigolette. "Explain this to me." For instance, yesterday I went to see him, to take a book he wished to have, because it was a romance that we used to read together in our happy days. At the sight of this book he burst into tears; that did not surprise me; it was very natural. Dame! this souvenir of our evenings, so quiet, so pleasant, seated by my stove, in my snug little room, to compare with his frightful life in prison—poor Germain! it is very cruel." "Be comforted," said Rodolphe to the young girl. "When Germain gets out of prison, and his innocence is acknowledged, he will find his mother and friends, and he will soon forget, in their society and yours, the terrible moments of trial." "Yes, but until then, Rodolphe, he is going to be still more tormented. And, besides, this is not all." "What is there besides?" "As he is the only honest man among all these bandits, they are prejudiced against him, because he cannot agree with them. The keeper of the place, a very good man, told me to advise Germain, for his own sake, to be less proud, to try and be a little more familiar with the men; but he cannot. They are stronger than he is, and I fear that some day they will injure him." Then suddenly interrupting herself, she said drying her tears, "But see, now, I only think of myself, and forget to speak to you about La Goualeuse." "La Goualeuse?" said Rodolphe, with surprise.

"The day before yesterday, on going to see Louise at Saint Lazare, I met her." "The Goualeuse?" "Yes, Monsieur Rodolphe." "At Saint Lazare?" "She came out with an old lady." "It is impossible!" cried Rodolphe, astonished. "I assure you it was her." "You must be mistaken." "No, no; although she was dressed as a peasant girl, I knew her at once. She is still very handsome, although pale; and she has the same soft, melancholy manner as formerly." "She has come to Paris without my knowledge! I cannot believe it. And what was she doing at Saint Lazare?" "The same as I was: visiting a prisoner, doubtless. I had not the time to ask more questions, the old woman who accompanied her had such a cross look, and was in such a hurry. Thus you know La Goualeuse also, Rodolphe." "Certainly." "Then there is no more doubt that it is you of whom she spoke." "Of me?" "Yes. Just imagine that I related to her the misfortunes of

Louise and Germain, both so good, so virtuous, and so persecuted by this villain Ferrand, taking care not to tell what you forbid, that you interested yourself in them; then La Goualeuse told me, that if a generous person whom she knew was informed of the unhappy and undeserved fate of my poor prisoners, he would certainly come to their assistance. I asked the name of this person, and she named you, Rodolphe." "It is she, it is she." "You may suppose that we were both much astonished at this discovery, or this resemblance of names. Thus we have promised to write if our Rodolphe was the same person. And it appears that you are the same." "Yes, I have also interested myself for this poor child. But what you have told me of her presence in Paris surprises me so much, that if you had not given me so many details of your interview with her, I should have persisted in believing that you were mistaken. But, adieu; what you have just told me about La Goualeuse obliges me to leave you. Remain always as reserved towards Louise and Germain as regards the protection of unknown friends. This secrecy is more necessary than ever. Apropos, how are the Morel family?" "Better and better, Rodolphe. The mother is on her feet again; the children improve daily. All owe their life to you—their happiness. You are so generous to them!" "And poor Morel, how is he?" "Better. I had news from him yesterday. He seems occasionally to have some lucid moments; there is great hope of restoring him to reason." "Come, courage, I shall soon see you again. Have you need of anything? Do you still earn enough to support yourself?" "Oh! yes; I take a little from my hours of rest, and it is not much damage, for I hardly sleep now." "Alas! my poor little neighbour, I much fear that *Papa Cretu* and *Ramonette* will not sing much more if they wait for you to begin." "You are not mistaken, Rodolphe; my birds and I sing no more, no; but, now you are going to laugh! well, it seems to me that they comprehend that I am sad; yes, instead of warbling gaily when I arrive, they utter such low, plaintive notes, that they appear to wish to console me. I am foolish to believe this, am I not?" "Not at all; I am sure that your good friends, the birds, love you too much not to perceive your sorrow." "Really, these poor little things are so intelligent!" said Rigolette, naively, much satisfied to be assured of the sagacity of the companions of her solitude. "Without doubt, nothing is more intelligent than

gratitude. Come, once more adieu. Soon, my neighbour, I hope your pretty eyes will become sparkling, your cheeks very rosy, and your songs so gay—that *Papa Cretu* and *Ramonette* will hardly be able to follow you. "May what you have said be true, Rodolphe," answered Rigolette, with a heavy sigh." "Well, adieu." "Adieu, soon to meet again."

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Rodolphe could not comprehend how Madame Georges had, without advising him, sent or brought Fleur de Marie to Paris; he returned home, to send an express to the farm of Boqueval. At the moment he entered the Rue du Plumet, he saw a post-chaise stop before the door of the hotel; it was Murphy, who had just returned from Normandy. The squire had gone there, as we have stated, to unmask the sinister projects of the step-mother of Madame d'Harville, and Bradamanté, her accomplice.

CHAPTER XIII.

MURPHY AND POLIDORI.

The face of Sir Walter Murphy was radiant with joy. On descending from the carriage, he handed to one of the servants of the prince, a brace of pistols, took off his long riding-coat, and, without taking time to change his dress, he followed Rodolphe, who, very impatient, had preceded him to his apartment.

"Good news, my lord, good news!" cried the squire, when he found himself alone with Rodolphe. "The wretches are unmasked! d'Orbigny is saved! You sent me off in time; one hour later, a new crime had been committed." "And Madame d'Harville?" "She is overjoyed at regaining her father's affection, and at having arrived in time, thanks to your advice, to save him from certain death." "Thus Polidori—" "Was once more the worthy accomplice of the step-mother of Madame d'Harville. But what a monster, this stepmother! what 'sang-froid!' what audacity! And Polidori! Ah! my lord, you have often been pleased to thank me for what you call the proofs of my devotedness." "I have always had proofs of your friendship, my good Murphy." "Well, my lord, never—no, never has this friendship been put to a severer test than in this affair," said the squire, in a half-joking manner. "How is that?" "The dis-

guise of the coalman, the peregrinations in the cité, were nothing, absolutely nothing, compared to the journey I have just made with this Polidori." "What do you say? Polidori—" "I have brought him with me." "With you?" "With me. Judge what a companion! during twelve hours, side by side with the man I despise and hate the most in the world! I would as soon travel with a serpent; my antipathy—" "And where is Polidori now?" "In the house in the Allée des Veuves, under good and sure guard." "Did he make no resistance to follow you?" "None. I left him the choice to be arrested on the spot by the French authorities, or to be my prisoner in the Allée des Veuves, He did not hesitate." "You were right; it is better to have him thus in our own hands. You are a man of gold, my old Murphy, but relate to me your journey; I am impatient to know how this unworthy woman and her depraved accomplice have been unmasked." "Nothing could be plainer. I had only to follow your instructions to the letter, to terrify and crush these wretches. In this case, my lord, you have saved, as usual, people of worth, and punished the wicked; noble agent of Providence that you are!" "Sir Walter Murphy, do you remember the flatteries of the Baron de Graün?" said Rodolphe, smiling. "Well, let them pass. I will commence, then; or, rather, you will first please to read this letter, from Madame d'Harville, who will inform you of all that occurred previous to my arrival." "A letter? give it to me quickly." Murphy, handing Rodolphe the letter of Clemence, added, "Thus, as it was agreed upon, instead of accompanying her to her father's, I alighted at an inn, serving as a kind of watering-place, at a short distance from the chateau, where I was to stay until she sent for me." Rodolphe read what follows, with tender and impatient solicitude:—

"My lord, after all I owe you already, I now owe you the life of my father! I shall let facts speak for themselves; they will tell you better than I can, what new treasures of gratitude towards you I have collected in my heart. Comprehending all the importance of the counsels which you gave through Sir Walter Murphy, who rejoined me on the road to Normandy, just as I left Paris, I arrived in all haste at the Chateau des Aubiers. I do not know why, the features of the servants who received me appeared sinister; I did not see among them any of the old servitors of out house; no one knew me; I was obliged to announce myself.

I learned that, for some days past, my father was quite ill, and that my step-mother had just returned from Paris with a physician. No more doubt—it was Doctor Polidori! Wishing to be conducted at once to my father, I asked where an old valet was, to whom he was much attached. This man had left the chateau some time before; this information was given to me by an intendant, who had conducted me to my apartments, saying that he would go and inform my step-mother of my arrival. Was it an illusion—prejudice? it seemed to me that my arrival was disagreeable even to the servants of my father. Everything in the chateau seemed mournful and sad. In the disposition of mind in which I found myself, one seeks to draw conclusions from the merest trifles. I remarked everywhere traces of disorder, of negligence, as if it had been thought useless to take care of a dwelling so soon to be abandoned. My inquietudes increased at each moment. After having settled my daughter and her governess, in my apartment, I was about to go to my father, when my step-mother entered. Notwithstanding her duplicity, the command which she ordinarily has over herelf, she appeared uneasy at my arrival. 'D'Orbigny did not expect your visit, madame,' said she to me. 'He is so ill, that such a surprise might be fatal. I think it, then, suitable to leave him in ignorance of your presence; he cannot, in any way—'

"I did not allow her to finish. 'A great misfortune has happened,' said I; 'd'Harville is dead: victim of a fatal imprudence. After such a deplorable event, I cannot remain in Paris, and I have come to pass at my father's my first mourning.' 'You are a widow? Ah, what overpowering good fortune!' cried my step-mother in a rage. From what you know of the unhappy marriage which his woman schemed for me, you will comprehend the atrocity of her exclamation. 'It is because I feared that you would be also as *overpoweringly fortunate* as I am, madame, that I came here,' said I, perhaps imprudently: 'I wish to see my father.' 'This is impossible,' said she, turning pale: 'the sight of you might cause a dangerous attack.' 'Since my father is so dangerously ill,' cried I, 'why was I not informed of it!' 'Such were the commands of d'Orbigny', answered my step-mother.

"I do not believe you, madame, and I am going to assure myself of the truth,' said I, making a step towards the door. 'I repeat to you that your unexpected appearance may do your fa-

ther much harm,' cried she, placing herself before me, to bar the passage. 'I will not allow you to enter his chamber until I have informed him of your return, with all the precautions his situation requires.' I was in a state of cruel perplexity. A sudden surprise, might, in effect, prove dangerous to my father; but this woman, ordinarily so cold, so much the mistress of herself, seemed so alarmed at my presence; I had so many reasons to doubt the sincerity of her solicitude for the health of him whom she had married from cupidity; finally, the presence of Polidori, the murderer of my mother, caused a terror so great, that believing the life of my father to be threatened, I did not hesitate between the hope of saving him and the fear of causing him any serious emotions. 'I will see my father at once,' said I to my step-mother. And although she caught me by the arms, I passed out. Losing her self-possession completely, this woman again endeavoured to stop me. This incredible resistance redoubled my alarm. I disengaged myself from her arms. Knowing the apartment of my father, I ran thither rapidly; I entered. Oh, my lord! in my life I shall never forget the scene presented to my view. My father, almost unrecognisable, pale, thin, suffering painted on every feature, was stretched out in a large arm chair. At the corner of the chimney-piece, standing near him, was Polidori, prepared to pour in a cup, which a nurse presented to him, some drops of a liquid contained in a little flacon of crystal which he held in his hand. 'His long red beard gave a still more sinister expression to his face. I entered so precipitately, that he made a gesture of surprise, exchanged a look of intelligence with my step-mother, who followed in haste, and instead of giving my father the potion which he had prepared for him, he quickly placed it on the chimney-piece. Guided by an instinct which I cannot yet account for, my first movement was to seize the flacon. Remarking the surprise and alarm of my step-mother and Polidori, I felicitated myself on the action. My father, stupified, seemed irritated at seeing me; I expected it. Polidori cast a ferocious glance at me; notwithstand- the presence of my father and that of the nurse, I feared that this wretch, seeing his crime almost discovered, would carry matters to extremities. I felt the need of help at this decisive moment; I rang the bell; one of the servants appeared; I begged him to tell my valet (who had his instructions) to go and bring some things I had left at the inn; Sir Walter Murphy knew that, not

to rouse the suspicions of my step-mother, I would employ this subterfuge to bring him to me. The surprise of my father, of my step-mother was such, that the servant retired before they could say a word; I was reassured; in a few moments Sir Walter would be near me. 'What does this mean?' said my father, at length, in a feeble but imperious and angry tone. 'You here, Clemence, without being sent for? And then, hardly arrived, you take possession of the flacon which contains the potion that the doctor was about to give me; will you explain this folly?'

"'Leave the room,' said my step-mother to the nurse. 'Calm yourself, my friend said she, addressing my father; "you know the least emotion may injure you. Since your daughter comes here in spite of you, and her presence is disagreeable, give me your arm, I will conduct you to the little saloon; and leave our good doctor to make Madame d'Harville understand the imprudence (not to say anything worse, of her conduct.' And she cast a significant look at her accomplice. I comprehended the design of my step-mother. She wished to lead my father away and leave me alone with Polidori, who, in this extreme case, would have doubtless employed violence to force from me the flacon, which might furnish an evident proof of his designs. 'You are right,' said my father; 'since she comes and persecutes me even in my own room, without any respect for my wishes, I will leave the place free to her importunity.' And rising with an effort, he accepted the offered arm, and made some steps towards the small saloon. At this moment, Polidori advancing towards me, I drew nearer to my father and said:—'I will explain to you the cause of my unexpected arrival and what is strange in my conduct. Since yesterday I am a widow; since yesterday I know your days are threatened, my father.' He walked painfully, with his body bent. At these words, he stopped, stood erect, and looking at me with profound astonishment, cried, 'You a widow? my days threatened? What does all this mean?' 'And who dares to threaten the days of M. d,Orbigny, madame?' audaciously asked my step-mother. 'Who threatens them?' asked Polidori. 'You, sir; you, madame,' I answered. 'What an outrage!' cried my step-mother, advancing towards me, 'What I say I will prove, madame.' 'Such an accusation is frightful!' said my father. 'I shall leave this house at once, since in it I am exposed to such atrocious calumnies!' said Polidori, with the assumed indignation of a

man whose honour was outraged. Beginning to feel the danger of his position, he doubtless wished to fly. As he opened the door, he found himself face to face with Sir Walter Murphy. Rodolphe, stopping a moment, extended his hand to the squire, and said, "Very well, my old friend; your presence must have been like a thunderbolt to this wretch." "That is the word, my lord; he became livid, and retreated two steps, looking at me in a kind of stupor; he seemed annihialated. To meet me in Normandy at such a moment! he thought it was a dream. But continue, my lord; you will see that this infernal countess d'Orbigny had also her turn of a *thunderbolt*, thanks to what you told me of her visit to the quack Bradamanté Polidori in the house of the Rue du temple; for after all, it is you who act; or, rather, I was only the instrument of your thought." Rodolphe smiled, and went on with the perusal of the letter of Madame d'Harville. "At the sight of Sir Walter, Polidori was petrified; my stepmother fell from one surprise into another; my father alarmed at this scene, and weakened by sickness was obliged to seat himself in a chair. Sir Walter double locked the door by which he entered; and, placing himself before the one which opened into another apartment, so that the doctor could not escape, he said to my father, with the most profound respect:— 'I ask a thousand pardons, count, for the liberty I take; but imperious necessity, dictated solely by your interest (and you will soon acknowledge it,) obliges me to act thus. My name is Sir Walter Murphy, as this wretch can testify, who, at my sight, trembles with fear; I am the confidential adviser of his Royal Highness the reigning Grand duke of Gerolstein. "'It is true,' said Polidori, confusedly, quite beside himself with alarm. 'But then, what do you come here for? what do you want?' 'Sir Walter Murphy,' said I, addressing my father, 'comes to aid me in unmasking these wretches, to whose machinations you were near falling a victim.' Then handing to Sir Walter the crystal flacon, I added, 'I have had the good fortune to become possessed of this at the moment Doctor Polidori was about administering to my father its contents.' 'A chemist from the neighbouring town shall analyze before you the contents of this bottle, which I am going to place in your hands, and if it be proved that it contains a slow and certain poison,' said Sir Walter to my father, 'there can remain no more doubt of the danger you have run, and which the affection of your daughter, has happily prevented.

"My poor father looked at his wife, Doctor Polidori, Sir Walter, and myself in a bewildered manner; his features expressed deep agony. I read upon his care-worn face the violent struggle which tore his heart. Without doubt he was resisting with all his strength growing and terrible suspicions, fearing to be obliged to recognise the guilt of my step-mother; at length, concealing his face in his hands, he cried, 'Oh, my God! all this is horrible—impossible! Is this, then, a dream?' 'No, it is not a dream,' cried my step-mother, audaciously: 'nothing is more real than this atrocious calumny, previously concocted, to ruin an unhappy woman, whose sole crime has been to consecrate her life to you. Come, come, my friend! let us not remain a second longer here,' added she, addressing herself to my father; 'perhaps your daughter will not have the insolence to detain you in spite of yourself.' 'Yes, yes, let us go,' said my father, almost wild; 'all this is not true—cannot be true: I wish to hear nothing further: my reason would give way; frightful suspicions would arise in my mind, empoison the few days remaining for me to live, and nothing could console me for such an abominable discovery.' My father seemed so suffering, so despairing, that at any sacrifice I would have put a stop to a scene so cruel for him. Sir Walter divined my thoughts; but wishing to do full and entire justice, he answered my father:—'Yet a few words, Count; you are about to experience the affliction, doubtless very painful, of discovering that a woman whom you believed attached to you by gratitude, has always been a monstrous hypocrite; but you will find certain consolation in the affection of your daughter, who has always been true. 'This passes all bounds!' cried my step-mother in a rage; 'and by what right, and on what proofs, dare you utter such frightful calumnies? You say this flacon contains poison. I deny it, and I will deny it until you prove the contrary; and even if Polidori might have by accident mistaken one medicine for another, is that a reason to dare to accuse me of having wished, with him as an accomplice—oh, no, no, I cannot finish—an idea so horrible is already a crime. Once more, I defy you to say on what proofs you and madame dare to sustain this frightful calumny,' said my step-mother with incredible audacity. 'Yes, on what proofs?' cried my unfortunate father. 'The torture I suffer must be brought to a close.' 'I have not come here without

proofs, said Sir Walter. 'And these proofs the answer of this wretch will furnish directly.' Then Sir Walter spoke to Polidori in German, who seemed to have recovered a little assurance, but lost it immediately." "What did you say to him?" demanded Rodolphe, laying aside the letter for a moment. "Some significant words, my Lord, to this effect: 'You have escaped by flight the sentence pronounced against you in the grand duchy; you live in the Rue du Temple, under the false name of Bradamanté; your present occupation is unknown; you poisoned the count's first wife; three days ago Madame d'Orbigny came to bring you here to poison her husband. His royal highness is in Paris, and has the proofs of all I advance. If you confess the truth, so as to convict this miserable woman, you may hope, not pardon, but some mitigation of the punishment you deserve; you will follow me to Paris, where I will place you in security until his royal highness decides your fate. Otherwise two things. the one is, that the prince will demand you from the government, or this moment I will send to the neighbouring town for a magistrate; this flacon, containing poison, shall be placed in his hands; you will be arrested at once, your lodgings in the Rue du Temple searched; you know how much this will compromise you, and French justice shall follow its course. Choose, then.' These revelations, these accusations, these threats, that he knew to be well founded, succeeding one another so rapidly, confounded this miscreant, who did not expect to find me so well informed. I the hope to lessen the punishment which awaited him, he did not hesitate to sacrifice his accomplice, and answered, 'Interrogate me—I will tell the truth concerning this woman."

"Well, well, my worthy Murphy, I expected no less from you." "During my interview with Polidori, the features of Madame D'Orbigny changed their expression of assurance alarmingly, although she did not understand German. She saw, from the increasing dejection of her confederate, of his supplicating attitude, that I had him in my power. In great anxiety, she endeavoured to catch the eye of Polidori, in order to give him courage or to implore his discretion, but he avoided her glances." "And the count?" "His emotion was indescribable; with his contracted fingers he clutched, convulsively, the arm of his chair, the perspiration standing on his forehead;

he hardly breathed; his burning and glazed eyes were fixed on mine; his agony equalled that of his wife. The continuation of the letter of Madame d'Harville will instruct you as to the end of this painful scene, my lord."

CHAPTER XIV.

PUNISHMENT.

Rodolphe resumed the perusal of the letter of Madame d'Harville.

"After a conversation in German, which lasted for some moments, Sir Walter said to Polidori, 'Now answer; was it not madame,' and he pointed at my step-mother, 'who, at the time of the illness of the first wife of the count, introduced you in the house as a physician?' 'Yes; it was she,' answered Polidori. 'In order to serve the fearful projects of madame, have you not been criminal enough to render mortal (by homicidal prescriptions) the slight illness of the Countess d'Orbigny?' 'Yes,' said Polidori. 'My father uttered a heart-rending sigh, raised his two hands towards heaven, and let them fall, quite overwhelmed. 'Falsehoods and infamy!' cried my stepmother. 'Silence, madame,' said Sir Walter Murphy in an imposing voice; then continued to question Polidori. 'Is it true that, three days ago, madame went to seek you at the Rue du Temple, where you reside, concealed under the false name of Bradamanté?' 'That is true.' 'Did not madame propose to you to come here to murder the Count d'Orbigny, as you had murdered his wife?' 'Alas! I cannot deny it,' said Polidori. At this overwhelming revelation, my father rose on his feet; he showed the door to my stepmother; then, extending his arms towards me, he cried, in a broken voice, 'In the name of your unfortunate mother, pardon me, pardon me! I have caused you much suffering; but I swear to you, I was a stranger to the crime which has conducted her to the tomb.' And before I could prevent him, he fell at my feet. When Sir Walter and myself raised him, he had fainted. I rang for the servants. Sir Walter took the doctor by the arm, and went out with him, saying to my stepmother, 'Believe me, madame, you had better leave this house before an hour, or I will de-

liver you up to justice.' The wretched woman left the room in a state of alarm and rage, which you will easily conceive. When my father recovered his senses, all that had taken place appeared like a horrid dream. I was under the sad necessity of relating to him my first suspicions concerning the premature death of my mother—suspicions which your knowledge of the previous crimes of Doctor Polidori, changed into certainty. I was obliged, also, to tell my father how my stepmother had carried her hatred even to my marriage, and what had been her object in causing me to marry d'Harville. As much as my father had shown himself weak and blind respecting this woman, just so much he wished to treat her without mercy; he accused himself, with despair, of having been the accomplice of this monster, in giving her his hand after the death of my mother; he wished to give her up to justice. I represented to him the odious notoriety of such proceedings. I engaged him to drive her away for ever from his presence, allowing her just enough for her support, since she bore his name. I had great trouble in procuring my father's consent to this; he wished me to turn her out of the house. This mission would be doubly painful; I thought that Sir Walter, perhaps, would act for me. He consented."

"And I consented with joy," said Murphy to Rodolphe; "nothing pleases me more than to give to the wicked this kind of extreme unction." "And what did this woman say?"

"Madame d'Harville had, in effect, carried her goodness so far as to ask from her father a pension of one hundred Louis for this creature. This appeared to me, not goodness, but weakness: it was bad enough to rob justice of such a dangerous woman. I went to find the count; he coincided entirely with me; it was agreed that we should give, in all, twenty-five Louis to the infamous wretch, so that she might subsist until she found employment. 'And what kind of employment can I find?' demanded she, insolently. 'Faith! that is your affair; you might be something like a nurse or housekeeper; but, believe me, seek the most humble and obscure calling; for if you have the audacity to tell your name, this name you owe to a crime, people will be astonished to see the Countess d'Orbigny reduced to such a condition; they will inquire, and you can judge of the consequences, if you are fool enough to

noise abroad the past. Conceal your name in some distant place; cause yourself to be forgotten; become Madame Pierre or Madame Jacques, and repent—if you can.' 'And you think,' said she to me, 'that I shall not claim the advantages secured to me by my marriage contract?' 'Certainly, madame, nothing can be more just; it would be unworthy of M. d'Orbigny not to execute his promises; not to recognise all you have done for him, and all you would have done. Sue, sue; address yourself to justice; I have no doubt the decision will be against your husband.' A quarter of an hour after our conversation, the creature was on her road to a neighbouring town."

"You are right; it is painful to allow such a woman to escape with impunity; but the scandal of such a trial for this old man, already so much debilitated, must not be thought of."

"I have easily persuaded my father to leave Aubiers to-day," resumed Rodolphe, continuing to read the letter from Madame d'Harville: "too many sad recollections attend him here; although his health is delicate, the journey and change of air may be of service, as the physician says who has taken the place of Polidori. My father wished that he should analyze the contents of the flacon, without informing him of what had passed; he answered that he could only do this at his own house, but that in two hours we should know the result. This was, that several doses of this liquid, prepared with infernal skill would, in a given time, produce death without leaving any traces. In a few hours I leave, with my father and daughter, for Fontainbleau; we will remain there for some time; then, according to the wish of my father, we shall return to Paris, but not to my own house; it will be impossible for me to live there after the deplorable accident which has taken place. Thus, as I have said, on commencing this letter, events show all that I owe to your solicitude. Warned by you, aided by your advice, strong in the co-operation of your excellent and courageous Sir Walter, I have been able to snatch my father from certain death, and I am assured of the return of his tenderness. Adieu, it is impossible for me to say more, my heart is too full; too many emotions agitate it; I should badly express all that I feel.

"D'Orbigny d'Harville.

"I open this letter in haste, to repair a neglect of which I am ashamed. In seeking, from your noble advice, to do some good, I

went to the prison of Saint Lazare to visit the poor prisoners; I found there an unfortunate child in whom you are interested. Her angelic sweetness, her pious resignation, are the admiration of the respectable women who overlook the inmates. To inform you where the Goualeuse (such, I believe, is her name) can be found, is to request you to obtain her liberty; this unfortunate girl will relate to you by what a concourse of sinister circumstances, carried away from the asylum where you had placed her, she has been thrown into this prison, where she is appreciated by the purity of her conduct. Permit me also to recall to your mind my two future protégées, the unhappy mother and daughter, despoiled by the notary, Ferrand. Where are they? Have you had any information concerning them? Oh, I pray you, endeavour to discover them, so that on my return to Paris I can pay them the debt which I have contracted towards all unfortunates."

"The Goualeuse has, then, left the farm of Boqueval?" cried Murphy, as much astonished as Rodolphe at this new revelation. "I heard, but just now, that she was seen coming out of Saint Lazare," answered Rodolphe; "I am lost in conjecture; the silence of Madame Georges confounds and distresses me. Poor little Fleur de Marie, what new misfortunes have happened to you? Let a man on horseback be sent off at once to the farm, and write to Madame Georges that I beg of her to come at once to Paris. Say also to De Graün I wish permission to enter Saint Lazare. From what Madame d'Harville writes, Fleur de Marie is confined there; but no," said Rodolphe, reflecting, "she is no longer a prisoner, for Rigolette saw her come out in company with an aged woman. Can it be Madame Georges? otherwise, who is the woman! where is the Goualeuse gone to?"

"Patience, my Lord; before this night you shall know all about it, since to-morrow you will have to interrogate this scoundrel Polidori; he has, he said, important communications to make to you, but to you alone." "This interview will be hateful to me," said Rodolphe, sadly; "for I have never seen this man since the fatal day—where—I have—" Rodolphe could not finish; he concealed his face in his hands. "Eh! my Lord why consent to what Polidori demands! Threaten him with the French courts, or a demand on the government; he must resign himself to confess to me what he is only willing to confess to

you." "You are right, my good friend; for the sight of this wretch would render still more torturing these terrible recollections, to which are attached so many incurable griefs; from the death of my father to that of my poor little girl—I do not know but the more I advance in life the more I feel the loss of this child. How I should have adored her! how dear and precious to me had been this fruit of my first love, of my first and pure belief, or, rather, my young illusions! I should have poured upon this innocent creature the treasures of affection, of which its odious mother was unworthy; and, besides, it seems to me that, such as I had dreamed her, this child by the beauty of her mind, by the charms of her disposition, would have softened, calmed all the remorse which was attached, alas! to her fatal birth." "Hold, my lord; I see with pain the increasing sway which these regrets, as fruitless, as cruel, have upon your mind." After a pause, Rodolphe said to Murphy—"I can now make a confession to you, my old friend. I love—yes, I love passionately a woman worthy of the most noble and devoted affection. Ah! it is since my heart is opened anew to all the delights of love, since I am predisposed to tender emotions, that I feel more vividly the loss of my daughter. I should have feared thus to speak, that a new attachment might have weakened my regrets. It is not so; all my loving faculties have augmented. I feel myself better, more charitable; and more than ever, it is cruel to me not to have my daughter to adore." "Nothing can be plainer, my Lord, and pardon the comparison; but in the same manner, as certain men are joyous and benevolent in their intoxication, so you are good and generous in your love."

"Yet my hatred of the wicked is also become lively; my aversion to Sarah increases, doubtless with my grief for the death of my child. I imagine that this bad mother has neglected her; that her ambitious hopes once ruined by my marriage, she, in her selfish egotism, has abandoned our child to mercenary hands, and that my daughter is perhaps dead from want of care. It is also my fault: I did not then know the extent of the sacred duties of paternity. When the true character of Sarah was suddenly revealed to me, I should at once have taken my daughter from her, to watch over her with love and solicitude. I ought to have foreseen that the countess could never be more than an unnatural mother. It is my fault—do you see—it is my fault." "My

lord, grief causes you to err. Could you, after such a fatal event had happened, defer for one day the long journey imposed on you—as—" "As an expiation! You are right, my friend," said Rodolphe, sorrowfully. "Have you heard anything from the countess since my departure, my lord?" "No: since her infamous accusations, which twice came near proving the ruin of Madame d'Harville, I have no news of her. Her presence here annoys me; it seems that my evil spirit is near me, that some new misfortune threatens me." "Patience, my lord, patience. Happily Germany is interdicted for her, and Germany expects us." "Yes; we will soon depart. At least, during my short stay at Paris, I shall have accomplished a sacred duty: I shall have made some steps more in the worthy path which an august and merciful will pointed out to me for my redemption. As soon as the son of Madame Georges shall be restored to her arms, innocent and free; as soon as Ferrand shall be convicted and punished for his crimes; as soon as I shall be assured of the future comforts of all the honest and industrious creatures who, by their resignation, their courage, and their probity, have deserved my interest, we will return to Germany—my journey will not have been fruitless." "Above all, if you succeed in unmasking this abominable Ferrand, my lord, the corner stone of so many crimes. Although the end justifies the means, and scruples should have no weight as regards this scoundrel, sometimes I regret having employed Cecily in this just and avenging reparation." "She ought to arrive every moment?" "She has arrived." "Cecily!" "Yes; I did not wish to see her; De Graün has given her very detailed instructions; she has promised to conform to them." "Will she keep this promise?" "Every thing seems to promise it—the hope of a mitigation of her punishment, and the fear of being sent immediately back to Germany; for de Graün has her well watched; at the slightest folly he will demand her of the government." "It is just; she has arrived as an escaped convict; when they know what crimes caused her perpetual imprisonment, they would give her up at once."

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"That does not astonish me, my worthy Murphy, for I know this woman; besides, De Graün was almost alarmed at the sagacity which Cecily comprehended, or, rather, guessed the part, at once *provoking* and *platonic*, she was to play at the notary's."

"But can she be introduced to him as early as you wish, through Madame Pipelet? People of the species of Ferrand are so suspicious." "I had, with reason, counted on the appearance of Cecily to combat and conquer this suspicion." "Has he already seen her?" "Yesterday. From the account given by Madame Pipelet, I do not doubt but that he was fascinated by the Creole; he took her at once into his service." "Come, my lord, our game is won." "I hope so; a ferocious cupidity, and a savage luxury, have led the executioner of Louise Morel to the most frightful misdeeds. It is in his luxury, it is in his cupidity, that he will find the punishment of his crimes. A punishment which will not be barren for his victims; for you see the aim of all the efforts of the Creole." "Cecily! Cecily! Never did greater depravity, never a more dangerous corruption, never a blacker soul serve to the accomplishment of a project of higher morality, or of a more equitable end: and David, my lord?" "He approves of all. With all the contempt and horror which he has for this creature, he only sees in her the instrument of a just vengeance. 'If this cursed woman can ever merit any compassion after all the injury she has done me,' said he to me, 'it will be in devoting herself to the punishment of this scoundrel, for whom she must be an exterminating demon.'"

A servant having knocked slightly at the door, Murphy went out, and returned, bringing in two letters, one of which seemed intended for Rodolphe.

"It is a line from Madame Georges!" cried he, reading it rapidly. "Oh, well, my lord, La Goualeuse?" "No more doubt," cried Rodolphe, after having read the letter; "another mysterious plot. The same evening on which the poor child disappeared, and at the moment Madame Georges was about to inform me of the event, a man, whom she did not know, arrived express on horseback, came to her, as from me, to reassure her, saying, I was informed of the sudden departure of Fleur de Marie, and that some day I would bring her back to the farm. Notwithstanding this notice, Madame Georges, uneasy at my silence, respecting her protégée, cannot, she writes to me, resist her desire to have some news of her cherished daughter, as she calls this poor child." "This is strange, my lord." "For what end should she have been carried off?" "My lord," said Murphy suddenly, "the Countess Sarah is no stranger to this affair."

"Sarah? And what makes you think so?" "Compare this with her denunciations to Madame d'Harville." "You are right," cried Rodolphe, a new light bursting upon him; "it is evident: I comprehend now; yes, always the same calculating being. The countess persists in believing, that by succeeding to break every tie of affection, she will make me feel the want of her. This is as odious as useless. Yet such an unworthy persecution must have an end. It is not only against me, but against all who merit respect, interest, and pity, that this woman directs her attacks. You will send de Graün at once, officially to the countess; he will declare to her that I am advised of the part she has taken in the abduction of Fleur de Marie, and that if she does not give me the necessary information so that I can recover this unhappy child, I shall act without pity, and then it is to justice de Graün must address himself."

"From the letter of Madame d'Harville, the Goualeuse must be confined at Saint Lazare." "Yes; but Rigolette affirms that she saw her free, coming out of this prison. There is a mystery to be cleared up." "I will go at once and give your orders to the Baron de Graün, but allow me to open this letter; it is from my correspondent at Marseilles, to whom I recommended the Chourineur, to facilitate the passage of the poor devil to Algiers." "Well, has he gone?" "My lord, here is something singular!" "What is it?" "After having waited at Marseilles a long time for a vessel to depart for Algiers, the Chourineur, who seemed every day more sad and thoughtful, suddenly declared, the day being fixed for his departure, that he preferred to return to Paris." "How singular!" "Although my correspondent had, as was agreed upon, placed a considerable sum of money at the disposal of the Chourineur, he only took what was absolutely necessary for him to return to Paris, where he will soon arrive." "Then he will explain to us himself why he has changed his mind; but send De Graün at once to the Countess M'Gregor, and go yourself to Saint Lazare to gain some information concerning Fleur de Marie."

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In an hour's time the Baron de Graün returned from the Countess. Notwithstanding his habitual and official sang froid, the diplomatist seemed troubled: hardly had the servant announced him, than Rodolphe remarked his paleness. "Well! De Graün, what is

the matter? have you seen the countess?" "Ah! my lord!" "What is it?" "Will your royal highness pardon me for informing you so suddenly of an event so fatal, so unlooked-for, so—" "The countess is, then, dead?" "No, my lord, but her life is despaired of; she has been stabbed with a poniard." "Ah! it is frightful!" cried Rodolphe, touched with pity, notwithstanding his aversion to Sarah. "And who has committed this crime?" "No one knows, my lord; the murder was accompanied by robbery; some one has entered the apartment and carried off a large quantity of jewels."

"And how is she now?" "Her life is almost despaired of, she has not yet recovered her consciousness. Her brother is in a state of distraction." "You must go every day to inquire after her, my dear De Graün." At this moment Murphy returned from Saint Lazare. "Learn sad news!" said Rodolphe to him; "the Countess Sarah has been wounded? her life is in great danger." "Ah! my lord, although she is very culpable, yet I cannot but pity her."

"Yes; such an end would be frightful? And the Goualeuse?" "Set at liberty yesterday, my lord, supposed by the intervention of Madame d'Harville." "But it is impossible! Madame d'Harville begs me, on the contrary, to make the necessary arrangements to get her out of prison." "Doubtless, and yet, an aged woman of respectable appearance, came to Saint Lazare, bringing the order to set Fleur de Marie at liberty. Both have left the prison. This is what Rigolette told me: but this aged woman, who is she? where have they gone to? what is this new mystery? The Countess Sarah alone can enlighten us; and she is in a state to give to us no information. May she not carry this secret with her to the tomb?" "But her brother, Thomas Seyton, could certainly throw some light upon the affair. He has always been her adviser."

"His sister is dying: some new plot is on foot; he will not speak; but," said Rodolphe, reflecting, "we must find out the name of the person who applied for her release: thus we can learn something." "It is just, my lord." "Try, then, to know and see this person as soon as possible, my dear De Graün; if you do not succeed, put your Badinot in the field; spare nothing to discover the traces of this poor child." "Your royal highness may count on my zeal." "Faith," said Murphy, "It is perhaps as

well that the Chourineur returns; we may need his services for these researches." "You are right; and now I am impatient to see arrive at Paris my brave deliverer, for I shall never forget that to him I owe my life."

CHAPTER XV.

PORTRAIT OF CECILY—HER INTRODUCTION TO FERRAND.

It was night. The profound silence which reigned in the pavilion, occupied by Ferrand, was interrupted at intervals by the sighing of the wind, and by the gusts of rain, which fell in torrents. These melancholy sounds seemed to render still more complete the solitude of this dwelling. In a bed-chamber on the first floor, very comfortably and newly furnished, and covered with a thick carpet, a young woman was standing before an excellent fire. What was very strange, in the centre of the door, which was strongly bolted, and opposite to the bed, was placed a small wicket of about five or six inches square, which could be opened on the outside. A reflecting lamp cast an obscure light in this room, which was hung with a garnet-coloured silk; the curtains of the bed, of the window, as also the covering of a large sofa, are of silk and worsted damask of the same colour. This luxury so recently imported into the dwelling of the notary, announces a complete revolution in the habits of Ferrand, who, until then, was of Spartan avarice and meanness, for all that concerned living. It is, then, on this garnet tapestry, of a strong back-ground and warmth of colour, on which is delineated the figure of Cecily, that we are going to paint her. Of tall and graceful stature, the Creole is in the flower and the bloom of youth. The developement of her fine shoulders, and of her luxurious person, makes her waist appear so marvellously slender, that one would believe that Cecily might use her necklace for a ceinture. As simple as it is coquettish and provoking, her Alsatian costume is of a strange taste, a little theatrical, and thus more calculated for the effect it was intended to produce. Her spencer of black cashmere, half open on her swelling bosom, very long in the corsage, with tight sleeve and plain back, is slightly embroidered with purple wool on the seams, and trimmed with a row of small, chased, silver buttons. A short petticoat of orange merino, which seems of exaggerated amplitude, although it fits admirably on the contours

of sculptured richness, allows a glance at the charming leg of the Creole, with the scarlet stockings and blue clocks, just as is met with among the old flemish painters, who show so complacently the garters of their robust heroines. Cecily is standing before the glass of the chimney-piece. The slope of her spencer displays her elegant and graceful neck of dazzling whiteness, but without transparency. Taking off her cherry-coloured cap, to replace it by a madras, the Creole displayed her thick and magnificent hair of blueish black, which, divided in the middle of her forehead, and naturally curled, descended no lower than the collar de Venus, which joins the neck to the shoulders. One must know the inimitable taste with which a Creole twists around her head these handkerchiefs, to have an idea of the graceful night dress of Cecily, and of the piquant contrast of this tissue, variegated with purple, azure, and orange, with her black hair, which, escaping from the close folds of the madras, surround, with their large silky curls, her pale, but round and firm cheeks. The two arms raised above her head, she finished, with her slender, ivory fingers, arranging a large rosette, placed very low on the left side, almost on the ear.

The features of Cecily are of the kind which it is impossible ever to forget.

A bold forehead, slightly projecting, surmounted a visage of perfect oval; her complexion of a dead white, the satin-like freshness of a camelia imperceptibly touched by a ray of the sun: her eyes, of a size almost immoderate, have a singular expression, for the pupil, extremely large, black, and brilliant, hardly allows the transparent globe of the eye to be seen from the corners of her eye-lids, fringed with long lashes; her chin is perfect; her nose straight, terminated by two nostrils which dilate at each emotion; her lovely and impudent mouth is of a lively red. Let one imagine this pale face, with its sparkling black glances, its red, moist, and glossy lips, which shine like wet coral. Let us say that this tall Creole, at once slender and fleshy, strong and active as a panther, was the type of that sensuality which is only lighted up at the fire of the tropics. * * * * *

Such was Cecily. Her detestable predelictions, for some time restrained by her real attachment for David, were only developed in Europe; civilization and climatical influence of the north had tempered the violence, modified the expression. Instead of cast-

ing herself violently on her prey, and thinking only, like her compeers, to destroy as soon as possible their life and fortune, Cecily, fixing on her victims her magnetic glances, commenced by attracting them, little by little, into the blazing whirlwind, which seemed to emanate from her; then, seeing them lost, suffering every torment, she amused herself by a refinement of coquetry, to prolong their delirium; then, returning to her first instincts, she destroyed them in her homicidal embraces.

Cecily, as we have said, but lately arrived from Germany; having formerly been seduced by a man frightfully depraved, she continued, without the knowledge of David, who loved her with as much idolatry as blindness, to display and exercise, for some time, her dangerous blandishments; but soon the fatal scandal of her adventures was unveiled; horrible discoveries were made, and she was condemned to perpetual imprisonment. To the foregoing, let there be joined an adroit, insinuating, quick mind—an intelligence so marvellous, that in a year she spoke both French and German with the most extreme facility, sometimes even with marked eloquence. Imagine, in fine, a corruption worthy of the courtesan queans of ancient Rome, and audacity and courage above all proof, propensities, diabolical wickedness, and one would have a correct idea of the new servant of Ferrand; the determined creature who dared to throw herself into the den of the wolf. And yet (singular anomaly), on learning from de Graün the provoking and *platonic* part which she was to play at the house of the notary, and what avenging ends were to be produced by her artifice, Cecily had promised to perform her part with a terrible hatred against Ferrand, being very indignant at the recital of the infamous violence he had used towards Louise, a recital it was found necessary to make, in order that she should be on her guard against the hypocritical attempts of this monster. When Cecily was presented to him by Madame Pipelet, as an orphan over whom she wished to have no control, no care, the notary had, perhaps, been less struck with the beauty of the Creole than fascinated by her irresistible glances, glances which, from the first interview, lighted a fire which disturbed his reason. For we have said, in speaking of the insensate audacity of some of his words, in the conversation with Madame de Lucenay, that this man, ordinarily with so much self command, so calm, so cunning, forgot the calculations of his profound dissimulation, when

the demon of luxury obscured his mind. Besides, he had no reason to doubt the protégée of Madame Pipelet. After his conversation with the latter, Madame Seraphin had proposed to Ferrand, to take in place of Louise, a young girl almost without a home, for whom she would answer. The notary had gladly accepted, in the hope of abusing, with impunity, the precarious and isolated condition of his new servant.

Finally, far from being suspicious, Ferrand found, in the march of events, new motives of security. All responded to his wishes. The death of Seraphin rid him of a dangerous accomplice. The death of Fleur de Marie (he thought her dead) released him from the living proof of one of his first crimes. Then, thanks to the death of La Chouette, and the precarious situation of the Countess M'Gregor, he no longer feared these two women, whose revelations and importunities might have been fatal. We repeat, no sentiment of suspicion came to counterbalance in his mind the sudden, irresistible impression which he had experienced at the sight of Cecily. He seized, with delight, the occasion to receive into his solitary dwelling the pretended niece of Madame Pipelet. Although Ferrand was never to obtain the object of his wishes, the Creole was very careful not to deprive him of all hope; but the vague and distant hopes which she rocked in the cradle of so many caprices were for him only increased tortures, and rivetted more solidly still the burning chain he wore.

If any astonishment is felt that a man of such vigour and audacity had not had recourse to cunning or violence to triumph over the calculated resistance of Cecily, then it must have been forgotten that Cecily was not a second Louise. Besides, the next day after her presentation to the notary, she had played quite another part than she by whose aid she had been introduced to her *master*, or he would not have been the dupe of his servant for two consecutive days. Instructed of the fate of Louise, by the Baron de Graün; and knowing afterward by what abominable means the unfortunate daughter of Morel had become the prey of the notary, the Creole, entering into this solitary house, had taken excellent precautions to pass the first night in security. The same evening of her arrival, remaining alone with Ferrand, who, in order not to alarm her, affected hardly to look at her, and told her, roughly, to go to bed; she avowed naively, that at night she was very much afraid of thieves, but that she was strong, resolute, and ready

to defend herself. "With what?" asked Ferrand. "With this," answered the Creole, drawing from the ample woollen pelisse, in which she was wrapped up, a little dagger, of high finish, and which made the notary reflect. Yet persuaded that this new servant only feared *robbers*, he conducted her to the room she was to occupy (the former chamber of Louise). After having examined the localities, Cecily told him, trembling, with her eyes cast down, that, from fear, she would pass her night on a chair, because she saw on the door neither lock nor bolt. Ferrand, already completely under the charm, but not wishing to awaken the suspicions of Cecily, said to her, in a cross tone, that she was a fool to have such fears; but he promised that the next day the bolt should be arranged.

The Creole did not go to bed. In the morning, the notary came to instruct her as to her duties. He intended to preserve, during the first day, an hypocritical reserve towards his new servant, in order to inspire her with confidence; but, struck with her beauty, which, in the broad daylight, seemed still more dazzling, blinded, and carried away by his feelings, he stammered forth some compliments on her figure and beauty. She, with rare sagacity, had judged, from the interview with the notary, that he was completely under the charm; at the avowal which he made of his *flame*, she thought she would at once throw off her feigned timidity, and change her mask. The Creole then assumed all at once a bold air. Ferrand went into new ecstacies, on the beauty of her features, and the enchanting figure of this new maid. "Look me full in the face," said Cecily, resolutely; "although dressed as an Alsatian peasant, do I look like a servant?" "What do you mean to say?" cried Ferrand. "Regard this hand—is it accustomed to rude labour?" And she showed a white and charming hand, with slender and delicate fingers, the long nails polished like agate, but of which the slightly shaded crown betrayed the mixed blood. "And this foot; is it a servant's foot?" And she advanced a ravishing little foot, which the notary had not yet remarked, and which he now only desisted from looking at, to regard Cecily with amazement. "I have told my aunt Pipelet just what suited me; she is ignorant of my past life; she thought I was reduced to this position by the death of my parents, and took me for a servant; but you have, I hope, too much sagacity to partake of her error, *dear master?*"

"And who are you, then?" cried Ferrand, more and more surprised at the language. "That is my secret. For reasons best known to myself, I have been obliged to leave Germany in this disguise. I wished to remain concealed at Paris for some time. My aunt, supposing me reduced to poverty, proposed to me to enter your service, spoke of your solitary manner of living, and told me that I would never be allowed to go out. I accepted quickly. Without knowing it, my aunt anticipated my most anxious desire. Who could look for and discover me here?" "Conceal yourself! and what have you done, to be obliged to conceal yourself?" "Soft offences, perhaps; but this is my secret." "And what are your intentions?" "Always the same. Saving your insignificant compliments on my shape and beauty, I should not, perhaps, have made this avowal, which your penetration had sooner or later provoked. Listen, to me, then, my dear master; I have accepted for the moment the condition, or rather the part of a servant; circumstances oblige me to do so. I shall have the courage to play this part to the end. I will submit to all the consequences. I will serve you with zeal, activity, and respect, to preserve my place; that is to say, a sure and unknown retreat. But at the least word, of gallantry, at the least liberty you take with me, I leave you—not from prudery, nothing in me, I think, looks like the prude—" And she cast a glance charged with sensual electricity, which reached the very bottom of the notary's soul; he shuddered. "No, I am not a prude," she resumed, with a provoking smile, which displayed her dazzling teeth. "When love bites me, the *bacchantes* are saints in comparison. But be just, and you will agree that your unworthy servant only wishes to perform honestly her duty as a servant. Now you know my secret, or at least a part of my secret; will you perchance, act as a gentleman? Do I seem too handsome to serve you? Do you desire to change parts and become my slave? So be it! frankly, I prefer that, but always, on this condition, that I shall never go out of the house, and you shall have for me the most paternal attention—that need not hinder you from saying that you find me charming: it shall be the recompense of your devotion and your discretion." "The sole? the sole?" said Jacques Ferrand. "The sole—unless solitude and the devil make me mad; which is impossible, for you will keep me company, and in your quality as a holy man, you shall exorcise the evil spirit. "Come, decide,

no mixed position; either I will serve you, or you shall serve me; otherwise I leave your house, and beg my aunt to find me another place. All this must seem strange to you; so be it; but if you take me for an adventurer, without the means of existence, you are wrong. In order to make my aunt my accomplice without her knowledge, I allowed her to think I was too poor to buy other clothes than these. Yet I have, you see, a purse well filled on this side with gold, on the other with diamonds (and she shewed the notary a long, red silk purse, filled with gold, and through the meshes of which shone precious stones). Unfortunately, all the money in the world could not give me a retreat as secure as your house, so isolated by the retirement in which you live. Accept, then, one or the other of my offers: you will render me a service. You see, I place myself at your discretion; for to tell you that I conceal myself, is to tell you I am sought for. But I am sure you will not betray me, even if you knew how to betray." This romantic confidence, this sudden transformation of character, troubled the brain of Ferrand. Who was this woman? Why did she conceal herself? Had chance alone conducted her to his dwelling? If, on the contrary, she came there for some secret purpose, what was this purpose? Among all the hypotheses which this singular adventure raised in the mind of the notary, the true motive of the Creole's presence never came to his thought. He had nct any other enemies than the victims of his licenciousness and cupidity. Now, all of them were in such a condition of trouble or distress, that he could not suppose them capable of spreading a snare of which Cecily was the bait. And, then, again, for what purpose was it spread? No, the sudden transformation of Cecily inspired but one fear to Ferrand: he thought that if this woman did not speak the truth, she was an adventurer who believing him rich introduced herself into the house to cajole him, find him out, and perhaps cause him to marry her. But, although his avarice and cupidity revolted at the idea, he perceived, shuddering, that these suspicions, these reflections, were too late; for, with a single word, he could put his suspicions at rest by sending this woman away. And this word he did not speak. Already he loved her, after his manner, and passionately. Already the idea of seeing this seducing creature leave his house seemed to him impossible, already, even, feeling the pang of a savage jealousy to think that Cecily might bestow on others, favours refused to him,

he experienced some consolation in saying, "As long as she is sequestered in my house, no one will possess her." The boldness of language of this woman, the fire in her eyes, the provoking liberty of her maners, sufficiently revealed that she was not, as she said, a *prude*. This conviction, giving vague hopes to the notary, assured still more the empire of Cecily. In a word, the licentiousness of Ferrand stifled the voice of cold reason; he abandoned himself entirely to the emotions which overwhelmed him.

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It was agreed that Cecily should be his servant only in appearance: in this manner there would be no scandal; besides, to assure still more the security of his guest, he would take no other domestic; he would himself serve her, and serve himself also; a neighbouring vintner could bring his repasts. He paid in money the breakfasts of his clerks, and the porter could take care of the office. Finally, the notary ordered to be promptly furnished a chamber on the first floor, according to Cecily's taste. She offered to pay the expense. He opposed it, and expended two thousand francs in furnishing it. This generosity was enormous, and proved the unheard-of violence of his passion. Then commenced for this wretch a strange life. Shut up in the impenetrable solitude of his house, inaccessible to all, more and more under the yoke of his phrensied love, no longer attempting to discover the secrets of this strange woman, from master he became a slave; he was the valet of Cecily—he served her at her repasts—he took care of her apartment. Informed by the baron that Louise had been surprised by a narcotic, the Creole only drank very pure water, only ate meals impossible to adulterate; she chose the chamber which she occupied, and assured herself that the walls concealed no secret doors. Besides, Ferrand soon comprehended that Cecily was a woman not to be surprised with impunity. She was vigorous, agile, and dangerously armed. Nevertheless, not to allow his passion to flag, the Creole seemed at times touched with his attentions, and flattered by the terrible domination she exercised over him. Then, supposing that by proofs of his devotion and self-denial he could make her forget age and ugliness, she delighted to paint in glowing colours. * *

At these words of a woman so young and so lovely, Ferrand felt sometimes his mind wandering; a devouring imagery pursued him, waking or sleeping, The ancient fable of the belt of

Nessus was realised for him. In the midst of these nameless tortures, he lost his health, his appetite, and sleep. Often, at night, in spite of cold or rain, he descended to his garden, and endeavoured, by a rapid walk, to calm his emotions. At other times, during whole hours, he looked into the chamber where the Creole slept; for she had had the infernal complaisance to allow a wicket to be placed in her door, which she often opened—in order that she might almost cause him to lose his reason, so that she could then execute the orders she had received. The decisive moment seemed to approach. The chastisement of Ferrand became from day to day more worthy of his outrages. He suffered all the torments of hell. By turns absorbed, lost, out of his mind, indifferent to his most serious interests, the maintenance of his reputation as an austere, grave, and pious man—a reputation usurped, but acquired by long years of dissimulation and cunning—he astonished his clerks by his aberrations, displeased his clients by his refusal to see them, and harshly kept at a distance the priests, who, deceived by his hypocrisy, had been until then his most fervent trumpeters.

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As we were saying, Cecily was arranging her head for the night before the glass. At a slight noise coming from the corridor, she turned her face away from the door.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE WICKET.

NOTWITHSTANDING the noise which she had just heard, Cecily did not the less tranquilly continue her toilette, she drew from her corsage, where it was placed like a busk, a dirk five or six inches long, in a case of black chagrin, with a handle of black ebony fastened with silver, a very simple handle, but perfectly *handy*. This was not a weapon of display. Cecily took the dirk from its case with excessive precaution, and placed it on the marble chimney-piece; the blade, of the finest Damascus and the best temper, was triangular; its point, as sharp as a needle, might have pierced a dollar without blunting it. Impregnated with a subtle and quick poison, the least wound from this poinard was mortal. Ferrand, having one day doubted the dangerous

properties of this weapon, the Creole made before him an experiment on the unfortunate dog of the house, who, slightly pricked in the nose, fell dead in horrible convulsions. The dirk placed on the chimney-piece, Cecily, taking off her spencer, of black cloth, the shoulders, bosom, and arms remained naked like a woman in ball costume. According to the custom of most girls of colour, she wore, instead of a corset, a second corsage of double linen, which was closely bound around her waist; her orange petticoat, remaining fastened under this kind of white canezou, with short sleeves, composed thus a costume much less severe than the first, and harmonized wonderfully with the scarlet stockings, and the Madras head-dress, so capriciously twisted around the head of the Creole. Nothing could be more pure, more beautiful, than the contour of her arms and shoulders, to which two little dimples gave a charm the more. A profound sigh attracted the attention of Cecily. She smiled, in rolling around one of her ivory fingers some stray curls which escaped from the folds of her "madras." "Cecily! Cecily!" murmured a voice, at once rude and plaintive. And at the narrow opening of the wicket appeared the pale and flat face of Jacques Ferrand; his eyes sparkled in the shade. Cecily, silent until then, began to sing softly in Creole, a Creole air. The words of this melody were soft and expressive. Although restrained, the noble *contre-alto* of Cecily overpowered the noise of the torrents of rain and violent gusts of wind, which seemed to shake the old house to its foundation. "Cecily! Cecily!" repeated Ferrand, in a supplicating tone. The Creole suddenly stopped, turned her head quickly, and appeared to hear, for the first time, the voice of the notary, and with nonchalance approached the door. "How! dear master, you are there?" said she with a slight foreign accent, which gave additional charm to her melodious voice. "Oh! you are handsome!" murmured the notary. "You think so?" answered the Creole: this madras suits well with my black hair, is it not so?" "Every day I find you still more handsome." "And my arm, see how white it is." "Monster! go away! go away!" cried Ferrand, furiously. Cecily laughed immoderately. "No, no, it is to suffer too much! Oh! if I did not fear death!" cried the notary, in a hollow voice; but to die—it is to renounce the sight of you, and you are so handsome. I prefer to suffer, and see you—" "See me; this wicket is made for that, and, also that we can talk as two friends, and

thus charm our solitude: which, in truth, does not weigh heavily, you are so good a *master!* See what dangerous confessions I can make through this door." "And this door, will you not open it? Yet see how submissive I am! to-night I might have tried to enter with you into your chamber—I did not."

"You are submissive for two reasons. In the first place, you know that being, from necessity, in the habit of wearing a dirk, I handle with a firm hand this venomous plaything, sharper than the tooth of a viper; you know also, that on the day I have to complain of you, I shall leave for ever this house, leaving you a thousand times more charmed, since you have been so gracious towards your unworthy servant as to be charmed with her." "My servant? it is I who am your slave—your slave, mocked, despised." "It is true enough." "And does not this touch you?" "It amuses me. The days, and, above all, the nights are so long." "Oh! the cursed—" "No, seriously, you appear so completely bewildered, your features change so sensibly, that I am flattered. It is a poor triumph, but you are alone here." "To hear that, and only be able to consume in powerless rage!" "How little wit you have; never, perhaps, have I said anything to you more tender." "Scoff—scoff." "I do not scoff; I have never seen a man of your age so much in love; and it must be acknowledged, that a young and handsome man would be incapable of such mad passion. An Adonis admires himself as much as he admires us; he loves from the end of his teeth; and, then, to love him, what can be plainer? It is his due, hardly is he grateful; but to love a man like you, my master, oh! that would be to raise him from earth to heaven; it would be to accomplish his wildest dreams, his hopes, the most extravagant. For in fine, the being who would say to you, 'You love Cecily madly; if I wish it, she shall be your's'—you would believe such a being endowed with supernatural powers, would you not, dear master?" "Yes, oh! yes." "Well! if you knew how to convince me better of your passion, I should have, perhaps, the bizarre fantasy to play myself, in your favour, this supernatural part. Do you comprehend?" "I comprehend that you scoff at me still, always, and without pity." "Perhaps solitude creates such strange fantasies!" Her tone of voice, until then, had been sardonic; but she pronounced these last words with a serious expression, and accompanied them by a glance which made the notary tremble. "Hush—do not look at me thus; you will make me

mad. I prefer that you should say to me *never*; at least, I could abhor you, drive you from the house," cried Ferrand, who again abandoned his vain hopes. "Yes, for I expect nothing from you. But woe is me! woe! I know you now enough. You told me to convince you of my love; do you not see how unhappy I am! Yet I do all I can to please you. You wish to be concealed from every eye; I conceal you, perhaps at the risk of compromising myself; in fine, I do not know who you are; I respect your secret; I never speak to you about it. I have interrogated you on your past life; you have not answered me." "Well! I was wrong I am going to give you a mark of blind confidence. Oh! my master, listen to me." "Once more a bitter pleasantry, is it not?" "No, it is very serious. You must know, you should know, the history of her to whom you give such generous hospitality." And Cecily added, in a tone of hypocritical and tearful compunction—"The daughter of a brave soldier, brother of my aunt Pipelet, I have received an education above my condition; I was seduced, then abandoned, by a rich young man. Then, to escape from the rage of my old father, I have fled from my native country." Then laughing heartily, Cecily added, "There, I hope, is a little story very presentable, and, above all, very probable, for it has often been related. Amaze your curiosity with that, while waiting for some revelation more piquant." "I was very sure that this was a cruel pleasantry," said the notary, with suppressed anger, "Nothing touches you, nothing; what must be done? speak, then, at least. I serve you like the meanest valet; for you I neglect my dearest interests; I know no more what I do. I am a subject of laughter to my clerks; my clients hesitate to leave me their business. I have broken with some pious people who used to visit me. I dare not think what the public say of this complete change in all my habits. But you do not know the fatal consequence, that my real passion may have for me. See, now, the proofs of my devotion, my sacrifices. Do you wish more? speak? Is it gold you wish? The world thinks me richer than I am, but I—" "What would you have me to do with your gold?" said Cecily, interrupting the notary, and shrugging her shoulders. "To reside in this chamber—what good would the gold do me? You have small invention!" "But it is not my fault if you are a prisoner. Does this room displease you? Will you have it more magnificent: speak, command." "For what purpose: once more, for what pur-

pose? Oh! if I expected here an adored being!" * * "I would have gold, silk, flowers, perfumes, all the wonders of luxury; nothing could be too sumptuous, too enchanting." "Well! these wonders of luxury; say a word, and—" "For what purpose, for what purpose? What should I do with the frame without the picture? And the adored being, where is he? oh! my master?" "It is true!" cried the notary bitterly. "I am old. I am ugly. I can only inspire disgust and aversion: she scoffs at me, and I have not the strength to drive her away. I have only strength to suffer." "Oh! the insupportable cry-baby; oh! the silly personage, with his complaints," cried Cecily, in a sardonic and contemptuous tone: "he does nothing but groan and lament, and has been for ten days shut up alone with a young woman, in a deserted house." "But this woman despises me—this woman is armed—this woman is locked up!" cried the notary, in a rage. "Well! overcome the disdain of this woman; cause the dagger to fall from her hand; constrain her to open this door, which separates you from her; and that not by brutal force; she would be all-powerful." "And how then?" "By the force of your passion." "Passion! and how can I inspire it?" "Stop, you are but a notary lined with a sacristan: you make me pity you. Am I to teach you your part? You are ugly; be terrible, your ugliness will be forgotten. You are old; be energetic, your age will be overlooked. You are repulsive; be threatening. Since you cannot be the noble horse, who neighs proudly in the midst of his companions, be not, at least, the stupid camel, who bends the knee and crooks the back; be a tiger. An old tiger, who roars in the midst of carnage, has also his beauty; his tigress answers him from the depths of the desert." At this language, which was not without a sort of bold and natural eloquence, Ferrand shuddered, eyeing the savage and almost ferocious expression of the face of Cecily, who, with heaving bosom, expanded nostril, haughty mouth fixed on him her large black and burning eyes. Never had she appeared so lovely. "Speak, speak again!" cried he, passionately; "you speak seriously this time. Oh! if I could—" One can do what one wishes," said Cecily abruptly. "But—" "But I tell you that if you wish, repulsive as you are—" * *

"Yes, I will do it! Try me, try me!" cried Ferrand, more and more excited. Cecily continued approaching nearer, and fixing on the notary a penetrating look. "For this woman would well

know," resumed the Creole, "that she would have an exorbitant caprice to satisfy; that these men, would look at their money if they had any, or if they had none, to a mean trick, while the old tiger—" "Would regard nothing—he—do you understand? nothing. Fortune, honour, he would know how to sacrifice all!" "True," said Cecily, placing her charming fingers on the bony and hairy Ferrand, who, for the first time, touched the soft velvet skin of the Creole.

He became still paler, and uttered a hoarse sigh. "How this woman would be beloved:" added Cecily, "had she an enemy, whom, pointing out to her old tiger, she would say, strike, and—" "And he would strike," cried Ferrand, endeavouring to approach the ends of her fingers to his withered lips.

"True, the old tiger would strike," said the Creole, placing her hand softly on his. "If you would love me," cried the wretch, "I believe I would commit a crime." "Hold, master," cried Cecily, suddenly withdrawing her hand; "in your turn go away, go away; I know you no more; you do not appear to me so ugly now as before; go away."

She retired quickly from the wicket. The detestable creature knew how to give to her gestures and to her last words an accent of truth so incredible; her look at once surprised and annoyed, seemed to express so naturally her spite at having for a moment forgotten the ugliness of Ferrand, that he, transported with frensied hope, cried, clinging to the bars of the wicket, "Cecily, return, command, I will be your tiger." "No, no, master," said Cecily, retreating still farther from the wicket; "and to lay the devil who tempts me, I am going to sing a song of my country. Master, do you hear? without, the wind redoubles; the tempest is unchained. What a fine night for two lovers, seated side by side near a sparkling fire." "Cecily, return," cried Ferrand, in a supplicating tone. "No, no; presently; when I can without danger; but the light from this lamp hurts my eyes, a soft langour weighs down my eyelids. I do not know what emotion agitates me; a demi-obscurity will please me more; one would say I am in the twilight of pleasure." And Cecily went towards the chimney, put out the lamp, took a guitar suspended on the wall, and stirred the fire, whose blaze illuminated this large room. From the narrow wicket, where he remained immovable, such was the picture which Ferrand perceived. In the midst of the

luminous horizon formed by the undulating light of the fire, Cecily, in a position full of softness, half reclining on a vast divan of garnet satin, held a guitar, whence she drew some harmonious preludes. The blazing hearth shed its rosy light on the Creole, who appeared brilliant in the midst of the obscurity of the rest of the apartment. To complete the effect of this picture, let the reader recal to his mind the mysterious and almost fantastic appearance of a room where the fire-light struggles with the long, dark shadows which tremble on the ceiling and walls. The storm redoubled its violence, its roaring could be heard from within. While preluding on her guitar, Cecily fixed her magnetic glances on Ferrand, who, fascinated, could not withdraw. "Hold, master," said the Creole, "listen to a song of my country; we do not know how to make verses; we use a simple recitative, without rhyme, and at each pause we improvise a couplet appropriate to the subject; it is very pastoral; it will please you, I am sure, master. This song is called 'the amorous wife,' it is she who speaks." And Cecily commenced a kind of recitative, much more accented by the expression of the voice than by the modulations of the song. A few soft and trembling cords served as an accompaniment.

THE SONG OF CECILY.

Flowers, everywhere flowers.
My lover comes! The hope of happiness enervates and destroys.
Soften the light of day—pleasure seeks a lucid darkness.
To the fresh perfume of flowers my love prefers my warm breath.
The glare of day shall not wound his eyes, for I will keep them closed by my kisses.
My angel, come! My heart beats; my blood burns!
Come, come, come.

These words, chanted with as much ardour as if she had addressed an invisible lover, were translated by the Creole into a theme of enchanting melody; her charming fingers drew from her guitar sounds full of delicious harmony. The animated face of Cecily, her veiled and moistened eyes, constantly fixed on those of Ferrand, expressed all the languor of the song. Words of love; intoxicating music; inflamed looks; silence; night; all conspired at this moment to disturb the reason of the notary. Thus lost, he cried, "Mercy, Cecily; mercy; I shall go wild. Hush! it is to die! Oh! that were mad!" "Listen, then, to the second

couplet," said the Creole, preluding anew. And she continued her passionate recitative.

If my lover were there, and with his hand touched my soft neck, I should shudder and die.
If he were there, and his hair touched my cheek, my cheek so pale would become red.
My cheek so pale would be as fire.
Life of my soul! if you were there, my parched lips could not speak.
Life of my life! if you were there, expiring, I would ask no mercy.
Those whom I love as I love you, I kill.
My angel, come! Oh, come! My heart beats; my blood burns!
Come, come, come!

If the Creole had accented the first stanza with a voluptuous languor, she poured into these last words all the transports of ancient love. And, as if the music had been powerless to express her wild delirium, she threw the guitar aside, and half rising from the couch, and extending her arms towards the door, she repeated, in an expiring, languishing voice,

"Oh! come, come, come!"

To paint the electric look with which she accompanied these words would be impossible. Ferrand uttered a terrible cry—"Oh! death—death to him you love so much, to whom you have addressed these words!" cried he, shaking the door in a transport of jealousy.

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Active as a tigress, with one bound, Cecily was at the wicket, and, as if she had with difficulty dispelled her feigned transports, she said to Jacques Ferrand, in a low, palpitating voice, "Well, I avow it. * * * I did not wish to return to the door. I am here in spite of myself; for I fear your words spoken just now. *If you say strike, I will strike.* You love me well, then?" "Do you wish gold—all my gold!" "No; I have enough." "Have you an enemy? I kill him." "I have no enemy." "Will you be my wife? I will espouse you." "I am married." "But what do you wish, then? My God? what do you wish?" "Prove to me that your passion for me is blind, furious; that you will sacrifice everything for me." "All, yes; all. But how?" "I do not know; but there was a moment the glance of your eye bewildered me. If now—now—you

Cicely I.

give me some proof of your love. I do not know of what I should be capable. Hasten; I am capricious; to-morrow the impression of this hour will, perhaps, be effaced." "But what proof can I give you on the moment?" cried the wretch. "It is an atrocious torment. What proof? Speak. What proof?" "You are only a fool," answered Cecily, retreating from the wicket with an appearance of extreme irritation. "I am mistaken. I thought you capable of energetic devotion. Good-night. It is a pity—" "Cecily! oh, do not go; return. But what must I do? tell me, at least. Oh, my senses wander. What must I do?—what do?"

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"But, in fine, speak; what do you wish?" cried the notary, quite beside himself. "Guess." "Explain; command." "Ah! if you love me as passionately as you say, you will find the means. Good-night." "Cecily." "I am going to shut this wicket, instead of opening the door—" "Mercy! listen—remain—I have found—" cried Ferrand, after a moment's pause with an expression of joy impossible to describe. The wretch was seized with a vertigo.

* * * * He lost all prudence, all reserve; the instinct of moral preservation abandoned him. "Well! this proof of your love?" said the Creole: who, having approached the chimney, took hold of her poniard, and returned slowly towards the wicket. Then, without being seen by the notary, she assured herself of the action of a small chain, one end of which was fastened to the door, the other to the doorpost! "Listen," said Jacques Ferrand, in a hoarse and broken voice; "listen. If I place my honour, my fortune, my life, at your mercy—here—on the spot—will you then believe I love you? This proof of an insane passion, will it suffice?"

"Your honour, your fortune, your life? I do not comprehend." "If I confide to you a secret which would place me on the scaffold?" "You—criminal? You jest. And your austerity?" "A lie." "Your probity?" "A lie." "You pass for a saint, and you would be a demon! You are a boaster! No; there is no man quite cunning enough, bold enough, thus to insinuate himself into the confidence and respect of men. It would be a frightful defiance cast in the face of society." "I am this man! I have thrown this taunt, this defiance, in the teeth of society!" cried

the monster, in an access of frightful pride. "Jacques! Jacques! do not speak thus," said Cecily. "Hold—you will make me mad!" "My head for your love—do you wish it?" "Ah! this is love, now!" cried Cecily. "Here—take my poniard; you disarm me." Ferrand took, through the wicket, the dangerous weapon with precaution, and threw it from him in the corridor. "Verily—you believe me, then?" cried he in transport. "If I believe you?" said the Creole, leaning with force her charming hands on those of Jacques Ferrand. "Yes, I believe you; for I see again your bewitching look—that look which fascinated me. Your eyes sparkle with savage ardour. Jacques I love your eyes,"

"Cecily!!!"

"You should speak the truth." "If I speak the truth! Oh! you shall see." "Your countenance is lowering. Your expression formidable. Hold, you are as fearful and beautiful as a mad tiger. But you speak the truth, do you not?" "I have committed crimes, I tell you." "So much the better, if by their avowal you prove your love." "And if I tell you all?" "I grant all; for if you have this blind confidence in me—do you see, Jacques—it will no longer be the ideal lover of the song I call. It is to you, my tiger, you, that I shall say come—come—come."

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"Oh, you will be mine, I shall be your tiger," cried he; "and then, if you will, you shall dishonour me—my head shall fall. My honour? my life, all is yours now." "Your honour." "My honour! Listen: ten years since an infant was confided to my care, and two hundred thousand francs for its support; I have abandoned this child. I spread the report that the child was dead, and I kept the money." "It was bold and skilful—who would have thought of it but you?" "Listen again: I hated my cashier. One night he took from me a little gold, which he returned the next day; but to ruin him, I accused him of having robbed me of a considerable sum. I was believed, and he was thrown into prison. Now my honour, is it at your mercy?" "Oh! you love me, Jacques, you love me. To inform me thus your secrets—what empire have I then over you? I will not be ungrateful; let me kiss this forehead, where so many infernal thoughts were created. "Oh!" cried the notary, stammering, "let the scaffold stand there, ready I would not draw back. Listen again: this child, once abandoned, crosses my path—she inspires

me with fears; I have had her killed." "You? And how? where?" "A few days since—near the 'Pont d'Asnieres,' at the Island of the Ravageur. One Martial drowned her in a boat. Are these details sufficient? do you believe me?" "Oh! demon from hell: you alarm, yet attract me. You inspire me. What is, then, your power?" "Listen again: Before that, a man had confided to me a hundred thousand crowns. I set a trap for him. I blew his brains out. I proved that he committed suicide, and I denied the deposit, which his sister reclaimed. Now my life is at your mercy—open." "Jacques, hold, I adore you!" said the Creole with warmth. "Oh! come a thousand deaths, and I have them!" cried the notary, in an intoxication impossible to describe. "Yes, you are right; were I young and charming, I should not experience this triumphant joy." The key! throw me the key! draw the bolt!" The Creole took the key from the lock, and handed it to the notary through the wicket, saying, "Jacques, I am mad!" "You are mine, at length!" cried he, with a savage roar, turning the key in the lock. But the door, fastened with a bolt, did not open. "Come, my tiger! come," said Cecily, in an expiring voice. "The bolt! the bolt!" cried Jacques Ferrand. "But if you deceive me," cried the Creole, suddenly, "if these secrets are an invention, to cajole me—"

The notary remained for a moment struck with stupor; he thought he had succeeded; this last dificulty raised his impatient fury to its climax. He thrust his hand quickly in his bosom, opened his waistcoat, broke with violence a small chain of steel, to which was suspended a small, thin portfolio, took it, and showing it through the wicket to Cecily, he said, in an oppressed and breathless tone, "Here is what would cause my head to fall: draw the bolt—the portfolio is yours." "Give it to me, my tiger," cried Cecily. And hastily drawing the bolt with one hand, with the other she seized the portfolio. But Ferrand did not abandon it until at the moment he felt the door ceding to his efforts.

But if the door ceded, it was only for about six inches, confined as it was by the chain above mentioned. At this unforeseen obstacle, Jacques Ferrand threw himself against the door, and shook it with a desperate effort. Cecily, with the rapidity of thought, took the portfolio between her teeth, opened the window, threw a cloak into the court, and with great dexterity making use of a cord previously fastened to a balcony, she let herself down into the

court, as rapidly and lightly as an arrow falls to the ground. Then wrapping herself up in haste in the mantle, she ran to the porter's lodge, opened it, drew the cord, went out into the street, and jumped into a carriage, which, since her residence at Ferrand's was sent every night by order of the Baron de Graün, and stationed not twenty steps from the notary's mansion. This carriage was quickly driven off, drawn by two stout horses. It reached the boulevard before Ferrand had perceived the flight of Cecily Let us return to this monster. Through the opening of the door it was impossible for him to see the window by which the Creole had escaped. With one mighty effort with his large shoulders, he burst the chain which had confined the door, and rushed into the chamber, but found no one. The cord danced in the wind, as he leaned from the balcony. Then, from the other side of the court, by the light of the moon, which burst forth at intervals from the driving clouds, he saw the gate open. In a moment he divined everything. A last ray of hope remained. Vigorous and determined, he sprang over the balcony using the cord in his turn, lowered himself into the court, and rushed out of house. The street was deserted—he was alone. He heard no other noise than the distant rolling of the carriage which was rapidly carrying off the Creole. The notary thought it was some belated vehicle, and attached no importance to this circumstance. Thus, for him no chance remained of finding Cecily, who carried with her the proofs of his crimes!!!

At this frightful certainty, he fell, thunderstruck, at the door of his house. He remained there a long time, dumb, immovable, petrified. With haggard eyes, fixed, his teeth compressed, his mouth foaming, tearing his breast mechanically with his nails, he felt his reason totter, and was lost in an abyss of darkness. When he awoke from his stupor, he walked heavily, and with an ill-assumed step; objects trembled in his sight; he felt as if recovering from a fit of intoxication. He shut with violence the door of the street, and re-entered the court. The rain had ceased. The wind continued to blow with violence, dashing the heavy-laden clouds, which veiled without concealing, the light of the moon. Slightly calmed by the brisk and cold air of the night, hoping to combat his internal agitation by the rapidity of his walk, he plunged into the obscure alleys of his garden, marching with rapid strides, and from time to time striking his forehead with his

clenched fists. Walking thus at hazard, he reached the end of an alley near a greenhouse in ruins. Suddenly he stumbled violently against a mound of earth newly raised. He stopped, and looked mechanically on some linen stained with blood. He was near the grave where Louise Morel buried her child. Her child—who was also the child of Jacques Ferrand. Notwithstanding his obduracy, notwithstanding the frightful fears which agitated him, he shuddered with alarm. There was something supernatural in this. Pursued by the avenging punishment of his *vice*, chance carried him to the grave of his child—unhappy fruit of his violence and his lewdness. Under any other circumstances, Ferrand had trampled on this sepulchre with atrocious indifference; but having exhausted his savage energy in the scene we have related, he was seized with a weakness and sudden alarm. His face was covered with an icy sweat, his trembling knees shook under him, and he fell lifeless across this open tomb.

CHAPTER XVII.

FRANCOIS GERMAIN.

The features of Germain were wanting in regularity, but a more interesting face could scarcely be seen; his bearing was exalted; his figure graceful; his dress plain, but neat, (grey trousers and a black frock-coat closely buttoned,) showed none of that slovenly carelessness so peculiar to prisoners: his white and clean hands bore witness of a care for his person, which had still more increased their aversion, for moral perversity is almost always joined to personal filthiness. His brown hair, naturally curled, which he wore long and parted on the side, according to the fashion of the times, hung around his pale and dejected face; his eyes, of a beautiful blue, announced frankness and kindness; his smiles, at once sad and sweet, expressed benevolence and habitual melancholy; for although very young, this unfortunate youth had experienced many trials. In a word, nothing could be more touching than his appearance, suffering, affecting, resigned; as also nothing more honest, more loyal, than the heart of this young man. The cause even of his arrest (in despoiling it of the calumnious aggravations due to the hatred of Ferrand) proved the kindness of Germain, and accused him only of a moment's

thoughtlessness or imprudence, culpable, doubtless, but pardonable, if one reflects that the son of Madame Georges was able to replace in the desk of the notary the sum taken to save Morel, the lapidary. Germain blushed slightly when, through the grating of the prison, he perceived the fresh and charming face of Rigolette.

She, according to her custom, wished to appear gay, to encourage and cheer the spirits of her protégée; but the poor girl badly concealed the sorrow and emotion that she had always felt since he had been imprisoned. Seated on a bench on the other side of the railing, she held on her lap her straw basket. "Come, Germain," said the grisette, approaching her face as close as she could to the grating, the better to examine the features of her friend; "let me see if I am satisfied with your face. Is it less sorrowful? Hum! so, so! take care; you will make me angry." "How kind you are to come again to-day!" "Again! what! that is a reproach." "Ought I not, in truth, to reproach you for doing so much for me—for me, who can do nothing but thank you?" "An error; for I am also as happy from my visits as you are. So I must, in my turn, thank you. Ah! ah! there is where I have caught you. Thus I have half a mind to punish you for your wicked ideas, by not giving you what I have brought." "Another kindness! how you spoil me! oh! thank you. Pardon me, if I repeat so often this word, which you dislike! but you leave me nothing else to say." "In the first place, you do not know what I have brought." "Whatever it may be, does it not come from you? Your touching kindness, does it not fill me with gratitude, and—" Germain could not finish, but cast down his eyes. "And of what?" asked Rigolette, blushing. "And of —and of devotion," stammered Germain. "Why not add respect at once, like at the end of a letter," said Rigolette, impatiently. "You deceive me: it was not that which you intended to say; you stopped short." "I assure you—" "You assure me! I see you blush through the grating. Am I not your little friend, your neighbour? Why do you conceal anything? Be frank, then, with me; tell me all," added the grisette, timidly; for she only waited for an avowal from Germain to tell him naively, honestly, that she loved him. An honest and generous love, which the misfortunes of Germain had called into existence. "I assure you," answered the prisoner, with a sigh, "that I conceal nothing from you!" "Fy, the false man!" cried Rigolette,

stamping her foot. "Well, you see this large cravat of white wool that I brought for you?" and she took it from her basket. "To punish you for your dissimulation, you shall not have it. I knit it for you. I said to myself, it must be so cold, so damp, in those large courts of the prison, that at least he will be protected nicely with this; he is so chilly." "How, you?" "Yes; you are liable to cold," said Rigolette, interrupting him. "Perhaps I recollect it well! that did not, however, prevent you hindering me (out of delicacy) from putting any more wood in my stove when you passed the evening with me. Oh, I have a good memory!" "And I also—only too good!" said Germain, in an agitated voice, passing his hand over his eyes. "Come, now, there you are becoming sad again, although I forbid it." "How, do you not wish me to be touched, even to tears, when I think of all that you have done for me since my detention here? And this new attention, is it not charming? Do I not know that you encroach upon your nights to make time to come and see me? On my account you impose upon yourself extra labour." "That is it! Pity me, then, quickly, because every two or three days I take a fine walk to come and visit my friends, I, who adore a walk. It is so amusing to look at the shops along the streets." "And to come out on such a day; such a wind!" "A reason the more; you have no idea what funny figures you meet! Some holding on their hats with both hands, so that the wind shall not carry them off; others, while their umbrellas turn the wrong side out, like a tulip, are making incredible grimaces, shutting their eyes, while the rain beats in their faces. Ah, this morning, during my whole walk, it was a real comedy! I promised myself to make you laugh by telling it to you. But you will not even force a smile." "It is not my fault; pardon me, but the kind interest you have manifested for me touches my very heart. You know it; my emotions are never gay; they are stronger than —" Rigolette, not wishing to let him observe that, notwithstanding her prattle, she was very near partaking his agitation, hastened to change the conversation, and replied, "You say that your feelings are stronger than you; but there is another thing that you will not master, although I have begged and supplicated you," added Rigolette. "Of what do you speak?" "Of your obstinacy in always keeping yourself apart from the other prisoners; in never speaking to them. The keeper has just told me

again that, for your own interest, you should associate with them. I am sure you will not do it. You are silent. You see well it is always the same thing! You will not be contented until these frightful men have done you some harm!"

"You do not know the horror with which they inspire me. You do not know all the personal reasons that I have to fly and execrate them and their fellows!" "Alas! yes; I think I know them. I have read the papers which you wrote for me, and which I went to your lodgings to get after your imprisonment. There I have learned the dangers you incurred since your arrival in Paris, because you would not associate yourself in crime with the scoundrel who brought you up. It was on account of the trap set for you that you left the Rue du Temple, only telling *me* where you were going to reside. In those papers I have also read something else," added Rigolette, blushing anew, and casting down her eyes; "I have read some things—that—" "Oh! that you should have been always ignorant of, I swear it," cried Germain, quickly, "but for the misfortune which has fallen upon me—Ah! I interest you; be generous; pardon me these follies; forget them. In happier times I allowed myself these dreams, as wild as they were." Rigolette had a second time endeavoured to extract an avowal from the lips of Germain, by making allusion to passages filled with tenderness and passion, which he had formerly written and dedicated to the recollections of the grisette; for, as we have said, he had always felt for her a lively and sincere affection; but to enjoy the cordial intimacy of his sweet neighbour, he had concealed this love under the mask of friendship. Rendered by misfortune still more suspicious and timid, he could not imagine that Rigolette loved him *with love;* he a prisoner, he withering under a terrible accusation, while before these misfortunes she had never evinced any attachment stronger than that of a sister. The grisette, seeing herself so little understood, suppressed a sigh, waiting, hoping for a better occasion to unfold to Germain the wishes of her heart. She answered, then, with embarrassment: "I can well comprehend that the society of these bad people causes you horror, but that is no reason for you to brave useless dangers." "I assure you that in order to follow your advice, I have several times tried to address some of them who seemed the least criminal; but if you knew what language! what men!" "Alas! it is true, it must be terrible." "What is still more

terrible is, to find I became more and more accustomed, habituated to the frightful conversations which, in spite of myself, I hear all day; yes, now I listen with sad apathy to the horrors which, during my first days here, aroused my indignation; thus, I began to doubt myself," cried he, with bitterness. "Oh! Germain, what do you say?" "By constantly living in these horrible places our minds become accustomed to criminal thoughts, as our hearing becomes habituated to the gross words which resound continually around us. I comprehend now that one can enter here innocent, although accused, and leave it perverted." "Yes, but to you—to you?" "Yes, I, and others a thousand times better than I. Alas! those who, before conviction, condemn us to this odious association, are ignorant of its mournful and fatal effects. They are ignorant that in almost all cases the air which is breathed here becomes contagious—fatal to honour!"

"I pray you do not talk thus; you cause me too much sorrow." "You ask me the cause of my growing sadness, there you have it. I did not wish to tell you; but I have one way of acknowledging your pity for me." "My pity?" "Yes, it is to conceal nothing from you. Ah! well! I acknowledge it with affright. I no longer recognise myself. I have good reason to despise, to fly these wretches. Their presence, their contact affects me, in spite of myself. One would say that they have the fatal power to vitiate the atmosphere they breathe. It seems to me that I feel the corruption entering through every pore. If they absolve me from the fault I have committed, the sight, the acquaintance of honest men, will fill me with confusion and shame. I have not yet had the enjoyment of pleasant companions; but I dread the day when I shall find myself among honourable people, because I have the consciousness of my weakness." "Of your weakness?" "Of my cowardice!"

"Of your cowardice? but what unjust ideas you have of yourself," "Ah! is is it not to be cowardly and culpable to compound with one's duty and probity?" And that I have done." "You!"

"On entering here, I did not extenuate the magnitude of my fault, all excusable as it was, perhaps. Well! now it appears to me less, from hearing these robbers and murderers speak of their crimes with obscene jests or ferocious pride. I surprise myself sometimes envying them their audacious indifference, and upbraiding myself bitterly for the remorse with which I am tor-

mented for so slight an offence, compared to their misdeeds."

"But you are right; your deed, far from being blameable, is generous; you were sure of being able to return the money, which you took only for a few hours, in order to save a whole family from ruin, from death, perhaps."

"No matter: in the eyes of the law, in the eyes of all honest men, it is a robbery. Doubtless it is less criminal to steal for such a purpose, than for any other; but that is a fatal symptom, to be obliged, in order to excuse one's self in one's eyes, to look around for a reason. I am no longer the equal of men without a stain. Behold me already forced to compare myself with the degraded men with whom I live. Thus, in time, I well see, conscience is blunted, becomes hardened. To-morrow, I shall commit a robbery, not with the certainty of being able to restore what I took for a laudable object, but I shall steal from cupidity, and I shall, doubtless, think myself innocent in comparison with those who murder to rob. And yet, at this present moment, there is as great a distance between me and an assassin, as there is between me and an irreproachable man. Thus, because there are beings a thousand times more degraded than I am, my degradation is to be excused in my eyes! Instead of being able to say as formerly, I am as honest as the most honest men, I shall console myself by saying, I am the least degraded of the wretches among whom I am condemned now to live!"

"Not always? Once out of this?"

"No matter; even if acquitted, these people know me; when they leave the prison, if they meet me, they will speak to me as their old jail companion. If any one is ignorant of the accusation which brought me to the assizes, these wretches will threaten to divulge it. Thus you well see, cursed and now indissoluble links unite me to them, while, shut alone in my cell until the day of my trial, unknown by them as they would have been unknown by me, I should not have been assailed by these fears, which may paralyze the best resolutions. And then, alone, in thinking of my fault, it would have been magnified instead of being diminished, the graver it appeared to me, the greater would have been my future expiation. Thus, the more I should have felt the need of my own pardon, the more in my poor sphere I should have tried to do good. For it needs a hundred good actions to atone for a single bad one. But shall I ever dream of expiating that which

at this moment scarcely causes me any remorse? Hold! I feel it, I obey an irresistible influence, against which I have struggled for a long time with all my strength. I was educated for crime, I yield to my destiny: after all, isolated, without family, what matters it that my destiny should be accomplished, be it honest or criminal? And yet, my intentions were good and pure. When they wished to make me guilty, I experienced a profound satisfaction in saying to myself, I have never been wanting in honour, and that, perhaps, was more difficult for me than all the rest. And now—oh! it is frightful—frightful," cried the prisoner, sobbing in so heart-rending a manner, that Rigolette, deeply affected, could not restrain her tears. * *

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Let us say, however, that Germain, thanks to his sterling probity, had struggled for a long time, victoriously, and that he felt the approaches of the malady more than he experienced its reality. His fear of seeing his fault become of less gravity in his own eyes, proved that he still felt all its enormity; but the trouble, apprehension and doubts, which cruelly agitated his virtuous and generous mind, were not the least, alarming symptoms. Guided by the rectitude of her understanding, by her woman's sagacity, and by the impulses of her love, Rigolette divined that which we have just said.

Although well convinced that her friend had not yet lost any of his probity, she feared that, notwithstanding the excellence of his nature, Germain might, at some future period, become indifferent to that which then tormented him so cruelly.

CHAPTER XVIII.

RIGOLETTE.

Rigolette, wiping her eyes, and addressing Germain, who was leaning against the grating, said to him with a touching, serious, almost solemn accent, and in a manner he had never seen her assume, "Listen to me, Germain: I shall express myself perhaps badly; I do not speak so well as you; but what I shall tell you will be as truly sincere. In the first place, you were wrong to complain of being isolated, abandoned." "Oh! do not think that I ever forget that which your pity for me inspires you to do."

"Just now, I did not interrupt you when you spoke of *pity;* but since you repeat this word, I must say that it is not pity at all which I feel for you. I am going to explain this as well as I can. When we were neighbours, I loved you as a brother, as a good companion; you rendered me some little services, I rendered you others; you made me partake of your Sunday amusements, I tried to be very lively, very agreeable, in order to thank you: we were quits." "Quits? oh! no—I—" "Let me speak in my turn. When you were forced to leave the house where we dwelt, your departure caused me more regret than that of my other neighbours." "Can it be true?" "Yes, because they were men without care, whom certainly I ought to miss less than you; and besides, they did not yield themselves to be my acquaintances until I had told them a hundred times that they could be nothing else; while you—you have at once imagined what we ought to be to each other. Notwithstanding this, you have passed with me all the time you had to spare; you taught me to write; you gave me good advice, a little serious because it was good; in fine, you have been the most attentive of my neighbours, and the only one who has asked nothing of me for the trouble. This is not all: on leaving the house you gave me a great proof of confidence. To see you confide a secret so important to a little girl like me made me proud. Thus, when I was separated from you, my thoughts were oftener of you than my other neighbours. What I tell you now is true; you know I never tell a falsehood." "Can it be possible you should have made this distinction between me and the others?" "Certainly, I have made it, otherwise I should have a bad heart. Yes, I said to myself, 'No one can be better than Germain; only he is a little too serious; but never mind, if I had a friend who wished to marry, to be very, very happy, certainly I should advise her to marry Germain; for he would be the paradise of a nice little housekeeper.'" "You thought of me for another!" Germain could not prevent himself from saying mournfully. "It is true; I should have been delighted to see you make a happy marriage, since I love you as a valued friend. You see I am frank; I tell you everything." "And I thank you from the bottom of my heart; it is a consolation for me to learn that among your friends, I was he whom you preferred."

"This was the situation of things when your troubles came. It

was then that I received the good and kind letter, in which you informed me of what you called your fault; which I think—who am not a scholar—is a good and praiseworthy action; it was then that you asked me to go for those papers which informed me that you always loved me, without daring to tell me so. These papers in which I read," and Rigolette could not restrain her tears, "that, thinking of my future, which sickness, or the want of work might render so painful, you left me, if you should die a violent death, as you feared—you left me the little which you had acquired by force of industry and economy—" "Yes; for if I were alive, and you found yourself without work, or sick, it is to me, rather that any one else, that you would address yourself, is it not so? I count on it; speak! speak! I am not mistaken, am I?" "It is very plain; to whom would you have me apply?" "Oh! hold; these are words which do good, which are a balm for many sorrows!" "I cannot express to you what I felt on reading, what a sad word! this will, of which each line contained a souvenir of me, or a thought for my welfare; and yet I was not to know these proofs of your attachment until you were no longer in existence. What would you? after such generous conduct one is astonished that love should come all at once! yet it is very natural, is it not, Germain?"

The young girl said these last words with a simplicity so touching and so frank, fixing her large black eyes on those of Germain that he did not understand her at first, so far was he from thinking himself beloved by Rigolette. Yet these words were so pointed, that there echo resounded from the bottom of his heart; he blushed, then became pale, and cried, "What do you say? I fear—oh!—I am mistaken—" "I say that from the moment in which I found you so kind to me, and in which I saw you so unhappy, I have loved you otherwise than as a brother and that if now one of my friends wished to marry," said Rigolette, smiling and blushing, "it is no longer you I should recommeud to her, Germain."

"You love me! you love me!" "I must then tell you myself since you ask me." "Can it be possible! "It is not, however, my fault, for having twice put you in the way to comprehend it. But no, you do not wish to understand a hint; you force me to confess these things to you. It is wrong, perhaps; but as there is no one here but you to scold me for my effrontery, I have less

fear; and, besides," added Rigolette, in a more serious tone, and with deep emotion, "just now you appeared to me much afflicted, so despairing, that I did not mind it; I have had the self-love to believe that this avowal, made frankly and from the bottom of my heart, would prevent you from being so unhappy for the future. I thought until now I have had no luck in my efforts to amuse or console you; my dainties take away your appetite, my gaiety makes you weep; this time at least—ah! what is the matter?" cried Rigolette, on seeing Germain conceal his face in his hands. "There, tell me now if this is not cruel!" cried she; "no matter what I say or what I do, you remain still unhappy: it is to be too wicked and by far too egotistical also. One would say there was none but you who suffered."

"Alas! what misery is mine!" cried Germain, with despair. "You love me when I am no longer worthy of you." "No longer worthy of you? There is no good sense in what you say now. It is as if I had said formerly, that I was not worthy of your friendship, because I had been in prison; for, after all, I have also been a prisoner; am I any the less an honest girl?" "But you were sent to prison, because, you were a poor abandoned, child, while I—what a difference!" "In fine as to the prison we have nothing to approach ourselves for. It is rather I who am presumptuous; for, in my situation, I ought only to think of marrying some workman. I am a foundling; I possess nothing but my little chamber and my good courage; yet I came boldly and propose to you to take me for a wife." "Alas! formerly this had been the dream, the happiness of my life! but now—I, under the weight of an infamous accusation, I should abuse your admirable generosity—your pity, which carries you away, perhaps! no—no." "But, my God!" cried Rigolette with impatience; "I tell you it is not pity, it is love. I only think of you! I sleep no more—I eat no more. Your sad and melancholy looks follow me everywhere. Is that pity? Now, when you speak to me, your voice, your look, go to my heart. There are a thousand things in you which now please me, and which, I had not remarked. I love your face, I love your eyes, I love you, I love your mind, I love your good heart; is this still pity? Why, after having loved you as a friend, do I love you as a lover? I do not know! why was I lively and gay when I loved you as a friend!

Why am I all changed since I love you as a lover? I do not know. Why have I waited so long to find you both handsome and good? to love you at once with my eyes and my heart? I do not know; or rather, yes, I do know: it is because I had discovered how much you loved me without ever telling it; how much you were generous and devoted. Then love mounted from my heart to my eyes, like a soft tear, mounts there when one is affected." "Really, I think I am in a dream on hearing you talk thus." "And I, then! I never should have thought it possible that I should dare to tell you all this; but your despair compelled me! Ah, well! now that you know that I love you as my friend, as my lover, as my husband, will you still say it is *pity?*

The generous scruples of Germain were dispelled in a moment before this avowal, so artless and courageous. A joy unlooked for tore him from his sorrowful meditation.

"You love me," cried he. "I believe you; your voice, your look, all tell me: I do not wish to ask myself how I have deserved such happiness, I abandon myself to it blindly. My life, my whole life, will not suffice to pay my debt to you! Ah! I have already suffered much, but this moment compensates all." "At length you are consoled. Oh! I was very sure, very sure I should succeed," cried Rigolette, with a burst of charming joy. "And is it in the midst of the horrors of a prison, and is it when everything oppresses me, that such a felicity—" Germain could not finish. This thought recalling the reality of his position, his scruples for a moment forgotten, returned more cruel than ever, and he resumed with despair: "But I am a prisoner; I am accused of robbery; I shall be condemned perhaps; and I would accept your valorous sacrifice. I would profit by your generous exultation! Oh, no, no, I am not infamous enough for this!" "What do you say?" "I may be condemned to years of imprisonment." "Well! answered Rigolette, with calmness and firmness, "they will see that I am a virtuous girl; they will not refuse to marry us in the chapel of the prison." "But I may be confined far from Paris." "Once your wife, I will follow you; I will establish myself in the place where you may be; I will work there, and I will come to see you every day." "But I shall be disgraced in the eyes of all." "You love me more than all; is it not so?" "Can you ask me?" "Then what matters it to you? Far from being disgraced in my eyes, I shall regard you as the martyr of your good heart." "But

the world will condemn, calumniate your choice." "The world! we will be the world to each other; and them, let them talk." "Finally, on coming out of the prison, my living will be precarious, miserable. Repulsed on all sides, perhaps I shall find no employment: and then, it is horrible to think of; but if this corruption which I dread should, in spite of myself, gain on me, what a future for you!" "You will not be corrupted; no, for now you know I love you, and this thought will give you strength to resist bad examples. You will think that even if every one should repulse you on your leaving the prison, your wife will receive you with love and gratitude, very certain that you are still an honest man. This language astonishes you, does it not? It astonishes *me*. I do not know where I find what I say to you. It is from the bottom of my heart assuredly, and that ought to convince you; otherwise, if you disdain an offer which is made from the heart, if you do not wish the attachment of a poor girl who—" Germain interrupted Rigolette with warmth. "Well, I accept—I accept; yes, I feel that it is sometimes cowardly to refuse certain sacrifices; it is to acknowledge that one is unworthy of them. I accept, noble and courageous girl." "True, very true? this time." "I swear it to you; and, besides you have spoken words which have struck me—which have given me the courage I wanted." "What happiness! and what have I said?" "That for you I ought to remain an honest man. Yes, in this thought, I will find the strength to resist the detestable influences which surround me. I will brave the contagion, and I will know how to preserve worthy of your love this heart, which belongs to you." "Ah! Germain how happy I am! if I have done anything for you, how you recompense me." "And then do you see, although you excuse my fault, I will not forget its gravity. My task, for the future shall be doubled—to atone for the past, and deserve the happiness I owe to you. For that I will do good; for, however poor one may be, the occasion is never wanting." "Alas! it is true; those who are more unfortunate than one's self can always be found." "In default of money—" "One gives tears, that which I did for the poor Morel's. And it is a holy alms: *the charity of the heart is worth more than that which gives bread.* In fine, you accept; you will not retract?"

"Oh never, never, my friend, my wife; yes, my courage returns; I seem to emerge from a dream; I doubt myself no

longer; I wronged myself—happily, I wronged myself. My heart would not beat as it does beat if it had lost its noble energy." "Oh! Germain, how handsome you look while thus speaking! How you reanimate me, not for myself, but for you! Now, you promise, do you not, that, now you have my love to shield you, you will no longer fear to speak to these wicked men in order not to excite their anger against you?" "Be comforted. On seeing me sad and dejected, they, doubtless, accused me of being a prey to remorse; and in seeing me joyous and gay, they will think that I have acquired their recklessness." "It is true; they will suspect you no more, and I shall be happy. So, no imprudence: now you belong to me. I am your little wife?" At this moment the guardian stirred: he awoke.

"Quick! whispered Rigolette, with a smile full of grace and maiden tenderness; "quick, my husband, give me a sweet kiss on the forehead, through the grating; it will be our betrothment." "And the young girl leaned her face against the iron bars. Germain, profoundly affected, touched with his lips through the grating, the pure and white forehead. A tear from the prisoner fell there like a humid pearl. Oh! touching baptism of this chaste, melancholy, and charming love!

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"Ho! ho! already three o'clock!" said the keeper, rising from his seat; "and visiters ought to leave at two. Come my dear girl," added he addressing the grisette, "it is a pity, but you must part." Oh! thank you, thank you, for allowing us to talk alone. I have given Germain good courage; he will no longer look so sorrowful, and thus he will have nothing more to fear from his wicked companions. Is it not so, my friend?" "Be tranquil," said Germain, smiling; "I shall be for the future the gayest in the prison." "Very good; then they will pay no more attention to you," said the keeper. "Here is a cravat which I brought for Germain," cried Rigolette; must I leave it at the office?" "It is the rule; but, after all, while I have already transgressed orders, a little thing more or less—come, make the day complete; give him quickly the present yourself," and the guardian opened the door of the prison. "This good man is right; the happiness of the day will be complete, said Germain, on receiving the cravat from the hands of Rigolette, which he tenderly pressed. "Adieu, and soon to meet again. Now I have no longer any fear to ask

you to come and see me as soon as possible." "Nor I to promise it. Adieu, good Germain." "Farewell, my dear little friend." "And be sure to make use of my cravat; take care you do not catch cold; it is so damp!" "What a handsome cravat! When I think that you made it for me! oh! I will always keep it," said Germain, carrying it to his lips. "Ah! now you will have some appetite, I hope. Do you wish that I should make my little dish for you?" "Certainly, and this time I will do it honour." "Do not be uneasy, then gourmand; you shall give me your opinion. Come, once more, adieu. Thank you, keeper; to-day I go away very happy and gratified. Adieu, Germain." "Adieu, my little wife; soon to meet again." Some moments after, Rigolette having put on her sandals, left the prison with a lighter heart than when she entered it. During the conversation of Germain with the grisette, other scenes were passing in one of the courts of the prison, where we shall now conduct the reader.

CHAPTER XIX.

LA FORCE.

If the material aspect of a vast house of detention, constructed with every reference to comfort and salubrity claimed by humanity, presents, as we have said, nothing gloomy or sinister, the sight of the prisoners causes a contrary impression. A person is commonly touched with sadness and pity when he finds himself in the midst of a crowd of female prisoners, in thinking that these unfortunates are almost always forced to crime less from their own will than by the pernicious influence of the first who betrayed them. And then, again, women the most criminal preserve, at the bottom of their heart, two holy ties which the violent action of passions the most detestable, the most impetuous, never break entirely—*Love and Maternity!* To speak of love and maternity, is to say that, with these poor creatures, a soft and pure emotion can still light up here and there the profound gloom of a wretched corruption. But with men such as the prison makes them, and casts into the world, there is nothing similar. It is crime of one cast: it is a lump of brass which only becomes red in the fire of infernal passions. Thus, at the sight of the criminals who encumber the prisons, one is at first seized with a shudder of alarm

and horror. Reflection alone leads you to thoughts more compassionate, but of great bitterness. Yes, of great bitterness; for one reflects that the vicious population of jails and galleys, the bloody harvest of the executioner, springs up from that mire of ignorance, of misery, and of stupidity. To comprehend this alarming and horrible proposition, let the reader follow us into the Fosse aux Lions. One of the courts of "La Force" is thus called. There are ordinarily placed the prisoners most dangerous for their previous ferocity, or for the gravity of the accusations which rest upon them. Nevertheless, it had been found necessary to add to their number temporarily, several other prisoners, in consequence of the repairs now going on in the prison. These, although equally under the jurisdiction of the Court of Assizes were almost honest people compared to the habitual inmates of the Fosse aux Lions. The gloomy, dark, and rainy sky, cast a mournful light on the scene we are going to describe. It took place in the middle of the court, which was a vast quadrangle, formed by high white walls, pierced here and there by some grated windows. At one of the ends of this court was seen a narrow wicket door; at the other, the entrance to the "chauffoir," a large paved hall, in the middle of which is a "calonfere" of cast iron, surrounded by wooden seats, on which were stretched several prisoners, talking among themselves. Others, preferring exercise to repose, were walking in the courts, in close ranks, four and five together, with locked arms. One should possess the energetic and sombre pencil of Salvator or of Goya to sketch these diverse specimens of physical and moral ugliness; to describe their hideous habiliments, the varieties of costume of these wretches, covered, for the most part, with miserable clothing, for, only being *attainted*, that is to say, *supposed innocents*, they were not dressed in the uniform of the *maison centrales*; some of them, however, wore it; for on their entrance into prison, their rags had appeared so dirty, so infectious, that after the customary bath, they had given to them the cap and coarse grey trousers of the condemned. A phrenologist would have attentively studied these ghastly and bronzed faces, with their flat foreheads, their cruel insidious glances, wicked mouths, and brawny necks; almost all offered a frightful resemblance to the brute. On the cunning features of this, one would find the subtle perfidy of the fox; on another, the sanguinary rapacity of the bird of prey;

on the third, the ferocity of the tiger; and on another, again, the animal stupidity of the brute. The circular walk of this band of silent beings, with bold and contemptuous looks, an insolent and cynical laugh, pressing one against the other, at the bottom of this court, offered something strangely suspicious. It caused a shudder to think that this ferocious horde would be, in a given time, again let loose among mankind, against whom they had declared an implacable warfare. How much sanguinary revenge, how many murderous projects, lurk under this appearance of brazen and jeering perversity!

Let us sketch some few of the prominent physiognomies of La Force; let us leave the others in the back ground. While one of the guardians watched those who were walking, a kind of meeting was held in the large paved hall. Among those who were present, were Barbillon and Nicolas Martial. He who appeared to *preside, and conduct* the discussion, was a prisoner nick-named the Skeleton. This man, of a good height, and about forty years of age, justified his appropriate nick-name by a leanness impossible to be described, and that we should call almost osteological. Although the emaciated muscles of this man were almost reduced to the condition of tendons, he was of extraordinary strength. The most robust resisted with difficulty the grasp of his long arms, and long, bony fingers. It could be called the grasp of an iron skeleton. The Skeleton, after having passed fifteen years of his life at the galleys for robbery and attempt at murder, had broke his "bar," and had been taken in the act of murder and robbery. This last assassination had been committed under circumstances of such ferocity, that, taking into account he was a robber, he looked upon himself, and with good reason, as already condemned to death. The influence which the Skeleton exercised over the other prisoners by his strength and perversity, had caused him to be chosen by the director of the prison, captain of the dormitory; that is to say, he was charged with the police of his ward, as far as regarded the order, arrangements, and neatness of the room and beds. He acquitted himself perfectly of these functions; and never had the prisoners dared to fail in the duties of which he had the superintendence. Skeleton, captain of the chamber, was talking with several prisoners, among whom were Barbillon and Nicolas Martial. "Are you

very sure of what you say?" asked the Skeleton of Martial. "Yes, yes; a hundred times, yes; Micou had it from Gros-Boiteux, who already has wanted to kill him, because he has betrayed some one." "Then let some one eat his nose, and put a stop to this," added Barbillon. "Just now, Skeleton was for giving a stab to this spy of a Germain." The captain took his pipe for a moment out of his mouth, and said, in a voice so low, so hoarse, that he could scarcely be heard, "Germain holds up his head; he is a spy; he troubles us; for the less one talks the more one listens. We must make him clear out of La Force. Once we make him bleed, they will take him from here." "Well, then," said Nicolas, "what change is that?" "There is this change," replied Skeleton, "that if he has betrayed, as Gros-Boiteux says, he shall not escape with a small bleeding." "Very good," said Barbillon. "There must be an example," said Skeleton, becoming more animated. "Now it is no longer the police who find us out; it is instigators and informers." "And me, and my mother, and Calebasse, and my brother at Toulon," cried Nicolas; "have we not been betrayed by Bras-Rouge? That is certain, now, since, instead of putting him here, they have sent him to La Roquette. They did not dare to leave him with us; he knew his treachery, the villain!" "And I," said Barbillon; "has not Bras-Rouge also betrayed me?" "I knew that he informed against you," answered the Skeleton. "Well, this must be put a stop to; we must have an example. Our traitor brothers carve out work for the police. They think they are sure of their necks because they are put in a different prison from those they have betrayed." "It is the truth." "To prevent this, every prisoner must look upon all spies as deadly enemies. When we have done the job for four or five in the court, the others will wag their tongues twice before they denounce robbers." "You are right, Skeleton," said Nicolas; "then Germain must die." "He shall die!" answered the captain; "but let us wait until the Gros-Boiteux comes. When he shall have proved to everybody that Germain is a spy, enough said, the sheep will bleat no more; his breath shall be stopped." "And what shall we do with the guardians who watch us?" asked the prisoner. "I have my own idea. Pique-Vinaigre shall serve us." "He! He is too cowardly." "And not stronger than a child." "Enough. I understand myself.

Where is he?" "He returned from the grate, but some one came for him to go and talk with his lawyer." "And Germain. Is he still at the grate?" "Yes; with the little girl who comes to see him." "As soon as he descends—attention! But we must wait for Pique-Vinaigre; we can do nothing without him." "Without Vinaigre?" "No." "And Germain shall be—" "I will take charge of it." "But with what? They have taken away our knives." "And these tongs, will you put your neck between them?" asked Skeleton, opening his long fingers, hard as iron. "You will choke him?" "A little." "But if they know it is you?" "Afterward? Am I a calf with two heads, such as is shown in the fair?" "That is true. One can only be made a head shorter once; and since you are sure of being—" "Doubly sure; the lawyer told me so yesterday. I have been taken with my hand in the pocket, and my knife in the throat of the victim. I am a second comer; it is all over with me. I will send my head to see, in the basket of the executioner, if it is true that he cheats the condemned, and that he puts sawdust in his pannier instead of bran, which the government allows us." "It is true; the guillotined has a right to his bran. My father was cheated, also, I recollect," said Nicolas Martial, with a ferocious chuckle. This abominable pleasantry made all the prisoners laugh loudly. * * * * *

"A thousand thunders!" cried Skeleton. "I wish they could hear us talk, these judges, who think to make us quake before the guillotine. They have only to come to the Barrier Saint Jacques the day of my benefit; they will hear me crack jokes with the crowd, and say to Charlot, in a bold voice, 'Samson, the cord, if you please!'" Renewed laughter followed this sally "The fact is, that the affair lasts as long as it takes to swallow a mouthful. Chalot, draw the cord: and he opens the door for you!" said Skeleton, continuing to smoke his pipe. "As for me, now that I know my road, and that I must stop at the Abbaye de Mort (the guillotine), I would as soon go to-day as to-morrow," said he, with savage energy. "I wish I was there now. I feel my blood in my mouth when I think of the crowd who will be there to see me. There will be four or five thousand who will fight and quarrel for places. They will hire out windows and chairs as for a procession. I hear them already cry 'Places to let!' And then there will be the troops; cavalry and infantry.

And all this for me! It is not for an honest man that they will take all this trouble. Hem! friends! Here is something to make a man proud. Even if he should be as cowardly as Pique-Vinaigre, it would make him resolute. All these eyes which are looking at you, give you courage; and it is but a moment to pass; you die boldly; that vexes the judges, and encourages the robber to carry it off boldly." "That is true," replied Barbillon, endeavouring to imitate the frightful boasting of Skeleton, "They think to make us afraid, and confess all, when they send Charlot to open his shop on our account." "Ah, bah!" said Nicolas in his turn. "One is not wrong to laugh at the shop of Charlot; it is like the prison and the galleys; we will laugh at them, also; as long as we are all friends together, let us be merry till we die." "For example," said a prisoner, "what would be tough, would be to keep us in cells day and night." "In cells!" cried Skeleton, with a kind of savage alarm. "Do not speak of it. In cells! All alone! I would rather they would cut off my arms and legs. All alone! Between four walls! All alone! No old cronies to laugh with! That cannot be? I prefer a hundred times the galleys to the central prisons, because at the galleys, instead of being shut up, one is out of doors, sees company, moves about. Well! I would rather a hundred times be a head shorter, than be put into a cell only for one year. Yes, thus, at this moment, I am sure of being cut down, am I not? Well, let them say to me, 'Would you prefer a year in a cell?' I would stretch out my neck. A year all alone! Can this be possible? What would they have one to think of when one is all alone?" "If they were to put you there by force." "I would not remain. I would make such use of my feet and hands that I would escape." "But if you could not? If you were sure that you could not escape?" "Then I would kill the first one I could, in order to be guillotined." "But if, instead of condemning the assassins to death, they condemned them to a solitary cell for life?" The Skeleton seemed to be staggered by this reflection. After a moment's pause he replied:—"Then I do not know what I should do. I would break my head against the walls. I would allow myself to die with hunger, rather than be in a cell. How? all alone; all my life alone with myself? without the hope of escape? I tell you it is not possible. You know there is no one

bolder than I am. I would bleed a man for a crown, and even for nothing, for honour. They think that I have only assassinated two persons; but if the dead could speak, there are five who could tell how I work." The brigand boasted of his crimes.

These sanguinary egotisms are among the most characteristic traits of hardened criminals. A director of the prison told us, *If the pretended murders of which these wretches boast were real, population would be decimated!*

"So I say," replied Barbillon, boasting in his turn; "they think that I have only killed the husband of the milkwoman in the cité; but I have served many others, with big Robert, who was *shortened* last year." "It was only to tell you that I fear neither fire nor devil. Well, if I were in a cell, and very sure of not being able to escape—thunder! I believe I should be afraid." "Of what?" asked Nicolas. "To be all alone," answered the captain. "Then, if you had to recommence your robberies and murders, and instead of prisons, galleys, and guillotine, there were only cells, you would hesitate?" "Faith! yes, perhaps," answered the Skeleton. And he spoke the truth.

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A noisy burst of laughter, and exclamations of joy proceeding from the prisoners, who were walking in the court, interrupted the meeting presided over by the Skeleton. Nicolas rose precipitately, and advanced towards the door, to ascertain the cause of this unaccustomed noise. "It is the Gros-Boiteux!" cried Nicolas, returning. "The Gros-Boiteux?" said the captain; "and Germain, has he descended from the talking-room?" "Not yet," said Barbillon. "Let him hurry, then," said Skeleton, "that I may give him an order for a new coffin."

CHAPTER XX.

CONSPIRACY.

Le Gros-Boiteux whose arrival had been hailed by the prisoners with such noisy joy, and whose denunciation was to be so fatal to Germain, was a man of middle stature; notwithstanding his obesity and his infirmity, he seemed active and vigorous. His bestial physiognomy, as was the case with most of his companions, much resembled a bull-dog's; his low forehead, his little yellow eyes,

his falling cheeks, his heavy jawbones, of which the lower, projecting beyond the other, was armed with long teeth or, rather, broken tusks, which protruded over the lips, rendered this animal resemblance still more striking; he had on his head an otter-skin cap, and wore over his coat a blue cloak with a fur collar.

Gros-Boiteux entered the prison accompanied by a man of about thirty years of age, whose brown and sun-burned face seemed less degraded than those of the other prisoners although he affected to appear as resolute as his companion; sometimes his face became clouded, and he smiled bitterly. The Gros-Boiteux found himself, to use a vulgar expression, in the land of his acquaintances. He could hardly reply to the felicitations and welcomes which were addressed to him from all sides. "Here you are at last, my jovial fellow. So much the better; we shall have a laugh." "We wanted you." "You have stayed away a long time." "Yet I have done all I could to return to my friends. It is not my fault if they would not have me sooner." "Just so, my old cock; no one will come of his own accord to be caged; but once there one must enjoy himself." "You are in luck, for Pique-Vinaigre is here." "He also? an old chum of Melun! famous! he will help us to pass the time with his stories, and customers will not be wanting, for I announce some recruits." "Who then?" "Just now, at the office, while they were enrolling me, they brought in two young men. One I do not know; but the other, who wore a blue cotton cap and a grey blouse, stuck in my eye. I have seen this fellow somewhere. I think it was at the *Lapin-Blanc*: a very fine looking man." "Say now Gros-Boiteux, do you recollect at Melun, that I bet with you, before a year, you would be nabbed?" "That is true; you have won: but I had more chances to be a second comer than to be crowned with roses! but you—what have you done?" "I have robbed in the American fashion." "Ah! good, always the same fashion?" "Always; I go my own nice little road. This trick is common; but greenhorns are also common; and if it had not been for the ignorance of my colleague I should not be here.' "Never mind, the lesson will be of service." "When I begin again, I will take my precautions; I have my plan." During the conversation of Gros-Boiteux with Frank, and Cardillac, two old chums, Barbillon had been by the orders of the captain, to recruit twelve or fifteen prisoners, picked men. The prisoners

remained in the court; some of them following the instructions of Barbillon, who spoke in a loud, quarrelsome tone, to attract the notice of the keeper, and thus to call his attention away from the hall, where were assembled Skeleton, Barbillon, Nicolas, Frank, Cardillac, the Gros-Boiteux, and some fifteen other prisoners, all waiting with impatient curiosity until the captain should take the floor. Barbillon, charged to spy and announce the approach of the superintendent, placed himself near the door. The Skeleton, taking his pipe from his mouth, said to the Gros-Boiteux, "Do you know a young man named Germain, with blue eyes, brown hair and the air of an honest man?" "Germain here!" cried the Gros-Boiteux, whose features expressed at once surprise, hatred, and anger. "You do know him, then?" "Don't I know him? My friend, I denounce him! he is a spy, he must be rolled up!" "Yes, yes!" said the prisoners together. "Enough I'll keep my eye upon him." "Let us hear how Germain is a spy?" said a prisoner. "Explain yourself, Gros-Boiteux," resumed the Skeleton. "Here it is," said Gros-Boiteux. "A Nantes man, named Velu, an old convict, brought up this young fellow, whose parents are unknown. When he was old enough he placed him in a banking-house at Nantes, intending to make use of him in an affair he had in view. He had two strings to his bow—a forgery, and robbery of the banker's strong box! perhaps a hundred thousand francs to gain by the two. All is ready; Velu counted on the young man as on himself; this blackguard slept in the room where the strong box was kept; Velu told him his plan; Germain neither said yes nor no, but told his patron all about it, and left the same evening for Paris." The prisoners uttered violent threats and murmurs of indignation.

"If he is a spy we must bone him." "If any one wishes it I'll seek a quarrel, and I'll brain him." "We must write on his face an order for the hospital." "Silence!" cried the Skeleton, in an imperious tone. "Continue!" he said to the Gros-Boiteux; and he recommenced smoking. "Believing that Germain had said yes, counting on his aid, Velu and two of his friends attempted the affair the same night; the banker was on his guard, one of the friends of Velu was nabbed in climbing a window, and he himself had the luck to escape. He arrived at Paris, furious at having been betrayed by Germain, and foiled in a superb affair. One

fine day he met the nice young man; it was broad day; he did not dare to touch him; but he followed him; he saw where he lived, and on one night, we two, Velu and the little Ledru, pounced upon Germain. Unfortunately, he escaped us; he left his nest in the Rue du Temple, and since that time we have not been able to find him; but if he is here, I demand—" "You have nothing to demand," said the Captain, with authority. Gros Boiteux was silent. "I take your bargain; you make over to me the skin of Germain, I'll take it off. I am not called the Skeleton for nothing. I am dead in advance; my grave is already dug at Clamart. Stop a moment; when each prison shall have killed its spy, no matter where he has betrayed, that will take away the appetite from the others. I set the example—they will follow it."

All the prisoners admiring the Skeleton, crowded around him. Barbillon himself, instead of remaining near the door, joined the group, and did not perceive that a new prisoner had entered. This new comer, clothed in a grey blouse, and wearing a cap of blue cotton, embroidered with red wool, pulled well over his eyes, started on hearing the name of Germain; then he went among the admirers of Skeleton, and loudly approved both with voice and gesture the determination of the Captain. "Isn't he a mad-cap, Captain?" said one. "What a learned man!" "The devil himself could not scare him." "And since the Skeleton is so sure of being cut down, it costs him nothing to kill the spy." "As for me, I think it cruel to kill this young man!" said Frank. "What! what!" cried the Skeleton, in an angry tone; "one has no right to pay off a traitor?" "Yes, true, he is a traitor; so much the worse for him," said Frank, after a moment's reflection. These last words, and the assurances of Gros-Boiteux, calmed the suspicions which Frank for a moment had raised among the prisoners. "Ah! and what shall we do with the keeper?" "Well! some one will engage his attention on one side." "No: we will hold him by force." "Yes." "No." "Silence," cried Skeleton. The most profound quiet ensued. "Listen to me well," resumed the Captain, in a hoarse voice; "there are no means to do the job while the keeper is in the court. I have no knife; there will be some stifled cries—the spy will struggle." "Then what is to be done?" "This is my plan: Pique-Vinaigre has promised to relate to us to-day, after dinner, his story of Gringalet. It rains,

we will all retire here, and the spy will come and take his seat in the corner, in his usual place. We will give some sous to Pique-Vinaigre to make him commence his story. It will be the prison dinner hour. The keeper seeing us quietly occupied in listening to the nonsense of Gringalet, will have no suspicions; he will go and take a pull at the canteen. As soon as he has left the court, we have a quarter of an hour to ourselves—the spy will be killed before the keeper returns. I take it upon myself. I have done the job for more stubborn fellows than he. But I wish no help."

"A moment," cried Cardillac:—"If he should enter the hall to listen to Pique-Vinaigre, and should see us fixing Germain, he is likely to cry for help: he is not a man in breeches; he can fire a pistol, look out." "That is true," said the captain. "There is a lawyer here!" cried Frank, the victim of Master Boulard; "there is a lawyer here!" he added, with astonishment. "And what is his name?" "Boulard," said Cardillac. "It is my man," cried Frank, doubling his fists; "it is he who stole my savings." "The lawyer?" asked the captain. "Yes, seven hundred and twenty francs which he collected for me." "You know him? he has seen you?" asked the Skeleton. "I think I have seen him, to my sorrow. But for him I should not be here. These regrets sounded badly in the ears of the Captain; he fixed his squinting eyes on Frank, who answered some questions of his comrades; then leaning over towards the Gros-Boiteux, he whispered in a low tone, "Here is a youngster who is capable of informing the keepers of our plot." "No; I answer for him; he will denounce no one, but he is still a little timid about crime, and he might be capable of defending Germain. Better get him out of the way." "Enough," and he said, in a loud tone. "I say Frank, won't you have a settlement with this brigand of a lawyer?" "Let me alone; let him come, his account is made out." "He is coming, get ready." "I am all ready; he will bear my mark." "That will make a scuffle; they will send the lawyer to his cell, and Frank to his dungeon," whispered the Captain to the Gros-Boiteux; "we shall get rid of both." "What a head! This Captain, is he not a trump?" said the bandit, with admiration; then he resumed aloud, "Ah! shall Pique-Vinaigre be informed that by the assistance of his story we mean to stuff the keeper and cut down the spy!" "No; Pique-Vinaigre has too much molasses in his composition, and is too great a coward; if he knew it he

would not tell his story; the blow struck, he will bear his part." The dinner-bell rang. "To your grub, dogs!" said the Captain; "Pique-Vinaigre and Germain are going to enter the court. Attention, friends!"

CHAPTER XXI.

THE STORY-TELLER.

THE new prisoner of whom we have spoken, who wore a cotton cap and grey blouse, had attentively listened to, and energetically approved the plot which threatened the life of Germain. This man, of athletic form, left the hall with the other prisoners, without having been remarked, and soon mingled with the different groups that pressed into the court around the persons who distributed the beef, which they brought in copper vessels, and the bread, in huge baskets. Each prisoner received a piece of boiled beef, which had served to make the soup for the morning meal, with half a loaf of bread, superior in quality to that given to soldiers. Those who, like Nicolas, had received victuals from out of doors, got up a feast, to which they invited the other prisoners. The guests of the widow were the Skeleton, Barbillon, and upon the latter's recommendation, Pique-Vinaigre, in order to get him in a good humour for telling stories. The ham, the hard eggs, the cheese and white bread, due to the forced liberality of Micou, the receiver, were spread out on one of the benches of the hall, and the Skeleton prepared to do honour to this repast, without feeling any inquietude concerning the murder he was about to commit. "Go and see if this Pique-Vinaigre is never coming. While I am waiting to choke Germain, I choke with hunger and thirst; do not forget to say to Gros-Boiteux that Frank must pull the hair of the lawyer so that we may be rid of them both." "Be easy, if Frank does not pitch into the lawyer, it will not be our fault." And Nicolas left the court yard. At this moment, Boulard entered the yard smoking a cigar, his hands plunged into his long surtout of grey moleskin, his cap drawn over his ears, his face smiling and gay; he spied Nicolas, who, on his side, looked at Frank.

The latter and Gros-Boiteux were dining, seated on one of the benches of the court; they had not perceived the lawyer, to whom

their backs were turned. Faithful to the recommendations of the Skeleton, Nicolas, seeing with the corner of his eye Boulard coming towards him, appeared not to remark him, and drew nearer to Frank and the Gros-Boiteux.

"Good day, my brave fellow," said the lawyer, to Nicolas, "Ah! good-day, I did not see you: you come, as usual, to take a little walk?" "Yes, my boy, and to-day I have two reasons for doing it. I am going to tell you why; but first take these cigars. Come, now, among comrades—the devil! one must not stand on ceremony." "Thank you. Ah! why have you two reasons for walking?" "You will understand it, my boy; I do not feel any appetite to-day. I said to myself, looking at these gay boys at their dinner, and seeing them make use of their jaws, perhaps hunger will come." "Not so bad. But look this way if you wish to see two cadets who eat lustily," said Nicolas, leading the lawyer by degrees near the bench of Frank, whose back was turned; "just looked at these two swallow-raws, your hunger will come as if you had just eaten a whole bottle of pickles." "Ah! let us see this phenomenon," said Boulard. "Eh! Gros-Boiteux!" cried Nicolas. Gros-Boiteux and Frank quickly turned their heads. The lawyer was stupified, and stood with his mouth open, on recognising him whom he had swindled. Frank, throwing his bread and meat on the bench, with one bound jumped at Boulard, whom he caught by the throat, crying,

"My money!" "My friend, listen to me." "My money! And yet it is too late, for it is your fault that I am here."

"But—I—but—"—"If I go to the galleys, mark me, it is your fault; for if I had that of which you robbed me, I should not have been under the necessity of stealing. I should have remained honest as I wished to be. And you will be acquitted perhaps—you—they will do nothing to you. I—but I will do something to you. I—you shall hear my marks. Ah! you have jewels, gold chains, and you rob! there—there—have you enough? No—here, take some more!"

"Help, help!" cried the lawyer, rolling under the feet of Frank, who struck him furiously. The other prisoners, very indifferent to this squabble, made a circle round the two combatants, or, rather, round the beating and the beaten, for Boulard, panting and much alarmed, made no resistance, but endeavoured to parry as well as he could, the blows of his adversary. Happily, the superinten-

dent ran, on hearing the cries of the lawyer, and released him from his peril. Boulard arose, pale and trembling, with one of his large eyes bruised, and without giving himself time to pick up his cap, cried, as he ran towards the wicket, "Keeper—open for me; I do not wish to remain a moment longer—help!" "And you, for having struck him, follow me to the director, said the keeper, taking Frank by the collar; "you will go to the dungeon two days for this. "I don't care; he has got his pay." "Ah!" whispered Gros-Boiteux to Frank, pretending to adjust his clothes, "not a word of what they are going to do to the spy." "Be easy; perhaps, if I had been there, I should have defended him; for to kill a man for that is hard; but denounce you? never." "Allons, will you come?" said the keeper. "There, we are rid of the lawyer and Frank now; hot work, for the spy!" said Nicolas.

As Frank left the court, Germain and Pique-Vinaigre entered.

Germain was no longer recognisable; his physiognomy, formerly so sad and cast down, was radiant with joy; he carried his head erect, and cast around him a cheerful and assured glance—he was beloved—the horrors of the prison disappeared from before his eyes. Pique-Vinaigre followed him with an embarrassed air; at length, after having hesitated two or three times to accost him, he made a great effort and slightly touched the arm of Germain before he had approached the group of prisoners, who, at a distance, were examining him with sullen hatred. There victim could not escape.

In spite of himself, Germain shuddered at the touch of Pique-Vinaigre; for the face and rags of the juggler did not speak much in his favour. But, recollecting the advice of Rigolette, and, besides, finding himself too happy not to be benevolent, Germain stopped, and said kindly to Pique Vinaigre;—"What do you wish?" "To thank you." "For what?" "For what your pretty little visiter wishes to do for my sister." "I do not understand you," said Germain, surprised. "I am going to explain. Just now, at the office, I met the superintendent, who was on guard." "Ah, yes; a very good man." "Ordinarily, the jailers do not agree with that description. Just now he slipped into the tunnel of my ear, 'Pique-Vinaigre, my boy, do you know Germain well?' 'Yes; the butt of the yard,' I answered." Then, interrupting himself, Pique-Vinaigre said to Germain, "Pardon, excuse me, if I have called you a butt. Do not think of it; wait for the end.

'Yes, then,' I answered, 'I know Germain, the butt of the prison.' 'And yours also, perhaps, Pique-Vinaigre? asked the keeper, in a severe tone. 'Sir, I am too cowardly and too good-natured to allow myself any kind of a butt, black, white, or grey, and Germain still less than any other; for he does not appear wicked, and they are unjust towards him.' 'Well, Pique-Vinaigre, you have reason to be on Germain's side, for he has been good to you.' 'To me? How so?' 'That is to say, not to you; but, saving that, you owe him great gratitude,' answered the keeper." "Let us see; explain yourself a little more clearly," said Germain, smiling.

"That is exactly what I said to the keeper: 'Do speak more clearly.' Then he answered, 'It is not Germain, but his pretty little visiter, who has been full of kindness for your sister. She overheard her relate to you her misfortunes, and, as she was about leaving the prison, the young girl offered her any assistance she could render." "Good Rigolette!" cried Germain, affected. "She took good care not to mention it. But this does not surprise me; she has a heart so generous, so susceptible." "The keeper went on: 'I heard all this without pretending to listen. Now you know it, if you do not try to render a service to Germain—if you do not advise him in case of any plot against him—you would be a finished scoundrel, Pique-Vinaigre.' 'Keeper, I am a scoundrel,' commenced I, 'it is true; but not a finished scoundrel. In fine, since the visiter of Germain wished to do good to my poor Jeanne, who is a good and honest girl, I will do for Germain what I can; unfortunately, that will be no great things.' 'Never mind, do what you can; I am also going to give you some good news for him; I have just heard it." "What is it, then?" asked Germain. "'To-morrow there will be a cell vacant,' the keeper told me to inform you." "Can it be true? Oh! what happiness! cried Germain. "This good man was right; it is good news you tell me." "I think so, for your place is not with folks like us, Germain." Then he added, hastily, and in a low tone, as he pretended to stoop for something. "Hold, look at the prisoners how they stare at us; they are astonished to see us talking together. I leave you; be on your guard. If they seek a quarrel, do not answer; they only want a pretext to engage you in a dispute, and beat you. Barbillon is to begin the dispute—look out for him; I will try to turn them from this notion."

Pique Vinaigre relating his story

And Pique-Vinaigre lifted up his head as if he had found what he had pretended to look for. Only informed of the conspiracy of the morning, which was to provoke a quarrel, in which Germain would be roughly handled, in order to force the director to change his ward: not only was Pique-Vinaigre ignorant of the murderous project of the Skeleton, but he was also ignorant that they counted on his story of Gringalet to deceive and distract the attention of the keeper.

"Come, then, lazy-bones" said Nicolas to Pique Vinaigre, going to meet him; "leave your ration of flesh there; we have a merry-making and feasting. I invite you." "Whereabouts? at the Panier Fleuri? at the Petit Ramponneau?" "*Farceur*! No, in the hall; the table is set on a bench. We have some gammon, eggs, and cheese—my treat." "That suits me; but it is a pity to lose my ration, and still more that my sister cannot profit by it. Neither she nor her children often see meat, except at the door of the butcher."

"Come, come, quick, Skeleton is making a beast of himself; he is capable of devouring the whole with Barbillon."

Nicolas and Pique-Vinaigre entered the hall; Skeleton, seated astride on the end of the bench, where the feast was spread, swore and cursed while waiting for the giver of the banquet. "Here you are at last, snail, laggard!" cried the bandit, at the sight of Pique-Vinaigre; "what have you been doing, then?" "He was talking with Germain," said Nicolas, carving the ham. "Ah! you were talking with Germain?" said he, looking attentively at Pique-Viniagre, without pausing in his mastication. "Yes!" answered the story-teller. "Ah! here is another who never invented boot-jacks and hard eggs. Isn't he a fool, this Germain! I used to think that he was a spy, but he is too much of a flat for that." "Ah! you think so?" said Skeleton, exchanging a rapid and significant glance with Nicolas and Barbillon. "I am as sure of it as that I see ham! And, then, how the devil would you have him a spy? he is always alone: he speaks to no one, and no one speaks to him; he runs away from us as if we had the cholera. Besides, he will not spy for a long time; he is going to be in a cell." "He!" cried Skeleton: "and when?" "To-morrow morning there will be a cell vacant." "You see we must kill him at once. He does not sleep in my ward; to-morrow will be too late. To-day we have only until four o'clock, and now it is al-

most three," whispered Skeleton to Nicolas, while Pique-Vinaigre talked with Barbillon. "All the same," answered Nicolas aloud, pretending to answer an observation of Skeleton. "Germain looks as if he despises us." "On the contrary, my children," answered Pique-Vinaigre, "you intimidate this young man. He looks upon himself, in comparison with you, as the least of the least. Just now, what do you think he said?" "How should I know?" "He said to me, 'You are very happy, Pique-Vinaigre, to dare to speak with this famous Skeleton (he used the word famous) as an equal and a companion. I am dying to speak to him; but he produces an effect upon me so respectful, that, should I see the prefect of the police in flesh, and bones, and uniform I could not be more overcome." "He told you that?" replied Skeleton, feigning to believe him, and to be flattered at the admiration he excited in Germain. "As true as that you are the greatest brigand on the earth, he told me so." "Then it is different; I must make it up with him. Barbillon had a mind to pick a quarrel, but he, too, will do well to let him alone." "He will do better," cried Pique-Vinaigre, pursuaded that he had turned away the danger with which Germain was threatened. "He will do better, for this poor fellow won't dispute; he is one of my kind, bold as a hare."

"Yet it is a pity: we reckoned on this quarrel to amuse us after dinner, the time appears so long." "Yes. What shall we do, then?" asked Nicolas. "Since it is so, let Pique-Vinaigre tell us a story. I will not seek a quarrel with Germain," said Barbillon. "Agreed, agreed," cried the story-teller. "That is one condition but there is another, and without both I tell no stories." "Come, what is your other condition?" "It is, that the honourable society which is poisoned with capitalists," said Pique-Vinaigre, assuming his mountebank twang, "will make for me the trifle of a contribution of twenty sous to hear the famous Pique-Vinaigre, who has had the honour to perform before the most renowned robbers, the most famous rogues of France and Navarre, and who is immediately expected at Brest and at Toulon, where he goes by order of government. Twenty sous! It is nothing." "Come, you shall have twenty sous when you have told the story." "After? No; before," cried Pique-Vinaigre. "On your word of honour?" "Yes for, after my tale is finished, you will be so satisfied, that it is no longer twenty sous, but twenty francs—but a hundred francs that you will force me to take! I know, myself, I would have the *mean-*

ness to accept the offering: so, you see, that, for economy's sake, you will do better to give me twenty sous in advance." "Oh! you are not wanting in jaw." "I have nothing but my tongue; I must use it: and then, the point of the matter is, that my sister and her children are in extreme want, and twenty sous in a small circle is felt." "Why does she not steal? and her children also, if they are old enough?" said Nicolas. "Do not speak of it; it wounds me, it dishonours me. I am too good." "You had better say too stupid, since you encourage her." "It is true, I encourage her in the vice of honesty. But she is only good for that trade—she makes me pity her. Ah! it is agreed. I will relate to you my famous history of Gringalet; but I must have my twenty sous; and Barbillon will not seek a quarrel with that imbecile Germain." "You shall have your twenty sous, and Barbillon shall not pick a quarrel with the imbecile Germain," said Skeleton. "Then open your ears, for you are going to hear something choice. But here is the rain, which sends in the guests; there will be no need to go after them."

In fact, the rain began to fall, the prisoners left the court, and came to take refuge in the hall, always accompanied by a keeper. This hall was a long paved room, lighted by windows looking out on the court; in the centre was placed the stove, near which were Skeleton, Barbillon, Nicolas, and Pique-Vinaigre. At a nod from the captain, Gros-Boiteux joined the group. Germain entered among the last, absorbed in delightful thoughts. He went mechanically to seat himself on the ledge of the farthest window in the room, a place he habitually occupied, and which no one disputed; for it was far from the stove, around which the prisoners clustered. Only some fifteen of the prisoners had been informed at first of the intended murder of Germain. But, soon divulged, this project counted as many adherents as there were prisoners; these wretches, in their blind cruelty, regarded this frightful plot as a legitimate vengeance, and saw in it a certain guarantee against the future denunciations of spies. Germain, Pique-Vinaigre, and the keeper, were alone ignorant of what was about to take place. The general attention was divided between the executioner, the victim, and the story-teller who was about innocently to deprive Germain of the only succour which he had to depend upon; for it was almost certain that the keeper, seeing the prisoners attentive to the story of Pique-

Vinaigre, would believe his presence useless, and profit by this moment of calm to go and take his repast.

When all the prisoners had entered, Skeleton said to the keeper, "I say, old man, Pique-Vinaigre, has a good idea: he is going to tell us his story of Gringalet. The weather is so bad, it is not fit to put a constable out of doors; we are going to wait here quietly for the time to go to our nests." "True enough, when he talks, you keep yourselves quiet. At least, there is no need of being behind your backs." "Yes," replied Skeleton; "but Pique-Vinaigre charges high for telling a story: he wants twenty sous." "Yes, the bagatelle of twenty sous; and then it is for nothing," cried Pique-Vinaigre. "Yes, nothing; for one should not keep a sous in his pocket, and thus deprive himself of the pleasure of hearing the adventures of poor little Gringalet. It is enough to break one's heart, to make your hair stand on end."

"I give two sous!" said Skeleton; and he threw his piece towards Pique-Vinaigre. Several sous were thrown from one side and the other, to the great joy of Pique-Vinaigre, who thought of his sister as he made his collection. "Eight, nine, eleven, twelve, thirteen!" he cried, picking up his money; "come, one more little effort; you cannot remain at thirteen, it is an unlucky number. Only seven sous wanting—the bagatelle of seven sous! Ah! messieurs, you will lead me to think that you have been placed here unjustly, or that you have been very unlucky." The piercing voice and the witticisms of Pique-Vinaigre, had roused Germain from his reverie; as much to follow the advice of Rigolette, to make himself popular, as to make a slight donation to this poor devil, who had shown some desire to be useful to him, he arose and threw a piece of ten sous at the feet of the story-teller, who cried, showing to the crowd the generous donor: "Ten sous! honour to Germain! Yes! for it is to him you will owe the greater part of Gringalet, and you will thank him for it. As to the three sous surplus caused by his donation, I will deserve them by imitating the voices of my personages, instead of speaking in my ordinary manner. This shall be another delight that you will owe to this rich capitalist, whom you must adore." "Come, don't jaw so much, but begin," said Skeleton. "A moment," said Pique-Vinaigre; "it is but just that this capitalist, who has given me ten sous, should have the best place, except our captain, who must choose first." This proposition answered

the purpose of Skeleton so well, that he cried: "It is true, after me he should be the best seated." And the bandit again cast a look of intelligence at the prisoners. "Yes, yes, let him approach," they cried. "Let him take the front seat." "You see, young man, your liberality is recompensed; the honourable society recognises that you have the right to the first seat," said Pique-Vinaigre to Germain. Believing that his liberality had really disposed his odious companions in his favour, enchanted thus to follow the advice of Rigolette, Germain, in spite of his repugnance, left his seat, and approached the story-teller. He, aided by Nicolas and Barbillon, having arranged around the stove the four or five benches of the hall, said with emphasis. "Here are front boxes! honour to whom honour is due; in the first place the capitalist. Now, let those who have paid seat themselves on the benches," added Pique-Vinaigre, gaily; firmly believing that Germain had, thanks to him, no more danger to apprehend. "And those who have not paid," he added, "will sit on the ground, or stand up, as they choose." Let us glance at the arrangements as now completed. Pique-Vinaigre, standing near the stone, was getting ready to commence his story. Near him, the Skeleton, also standing, ready to spring on Germain the moment the keeper should leave the hall. At some distance from Germain, Nicolas, Barbillon, Cardillac, and some other prisoners, among whom was seen the man in the blue cotton cap and grey blouse, occupied the back benches. The larger number of prisoners grouped here and there, some seated on the ground, others standing and leaning against the walls, composed the back-ground of this picture, lighted, after the manner of Rembrandt, by the three lateral windows, which cast a vivid light and deep shade on these figures, so differently characterized, and so strongly marked. The keeper, who, without knowing it, was, by his departure, to give the signal for the murder of Germain, stood near the half-opened door. "All ready?" said Pique-Vinaigre. "Silence!" said the captain, half turning round; then addressing Pique-Vinaigre, "Now, begin your story; we listen." A profound silence reigned in the hall.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE STORY OF GRINGALET.

PIQUE-VINAIGRE then commenced his story in these terms, in the midst of the profound silence of his auditory: "It is not very long since the events occurred which I am going to relate, you know what was called La Petite Pologne?" "I remember," said the prisoner in the blue cap and grey blouse, "it was some small houses near the Rue du Rocher, and the Rue de la Pepiniere." "Exactly, replied Vinaigre; there were no streets, but lanes; no houses, but hovels; no pavement, but a little carpet of mud and manure, so that the noise of the carriages would not have incommoded you if any had passed. From morning to night, and above all, from night to morning, what one did not choose to hear, were cries, '*watch!*' '*help!*' '*murder!*' but the watch did not disturb himself. So many the more with their brains dashed out in La Petite Pologne—so many the less to be arrested! The swarming population therein, you should have seen it; very few jewellers, goldsmiths, bankers lodged there; but, to make amends, there were heaps of organ players, rope-dancers, Punch and Judies, or keepers of curious beasts. Among the latter, was one named Cut-in-Two, so cruel was he; but he was, above all, cruel towards children. They called him Cut-in-Two, because, with a hatchet, he cut in two a little Savoyard."

At this part of the story of Pique-Vinaigre, the clock of the prison struck a quarter past three. The prisoners entering their sleeping apartments at four o'clock, the crime of the Skeleton was to be consummated before that hour. "Thousand thunders! the keeper does not go," he whispered to the Gros-Boiteux. "Be quiet; once the story in train, he will leave." Pique-Vinaigre continued his recital. "No one knew whence Cut-in-Two came: some said he was an Italian, others a Bohemian, others a Turk, others an African; the old women called him a magician, although a magician in these days may appear droll; as for me, I should be quite tempted to say the same as the old women. What makes this likely, is, that he always had with him a great red ape called Gargousse, which was so cunning and wicked, that one would have said he had the devil in his belly. As to Cut-in-Two, I am going to show him up: he had a skin the colour of a boot-lining, hair as red as the hide of his ape, green eyes, and that

which makes me think with the old women that he was a magician, is, that he had a black tongue." "Black tongue?" said Barbillon. "Black as ink!" answered Pique-Vinaigre. "And how is that?" "Because before he was born, his mother had probably spoken of a negro," answered Pique-Vinaigre, with modest assurance. "To this ornament, he joined the trade of having I do not know how many tortoises, apes, Indian hogs, white mice, foxes, and marmots, with an equal number of little Savoyards or abandoned children. Every morning he distributed to each one his beast and a piece of black bread, and started them off, to beg for a sous or dance 'La Catalina.' Those who, at night, brought back less than fifteen sous, were beaten, oh! how they were beaten! so that they were heard to cry from one end of Petite Pologne to the other. I must tell you also that there was in Petite Pologne, a man who was called the dean, because he was the longest resident of this quarter, and also the mayor, provost, justice of the peace, or, rather, of war, for it was in his court (he was a wine merchant) that they went to comb one another's heads, when there was no other way to settle their disputes. Although quite old, the dean was strong as a Hercules and very much feared; they only swore by him in Petite Pologne: when he said 'it is good,' every one said 'it is very good;' when he said 'it is bad,' every one said 'it is very bad;' he was a good man at the bottom, but terrible; when, for example, strong people caused misery to the weaker, then, stand from under him. As the dean was the neighbour of Cut-in-Two, he had at the commencement heard the children cry, on account of the blows which the owner of the beasts gave them; but he said to him, 'If I hear the children cry again I'll make you cry in your turn, and, as you have a stronger voice, I'll strike harder.'" "Farceur of a dean! I like the dean!" said the prisoner in a blue cap. "And so do I," added the keeper, approaching the group. The Skeleton could not restrain a movement of angry impatience.

Pique-Vinaigre continued:

"Thanks to the dean, who had threatened Cut-in-Two, the children were no more heard to cry at night in Petite Pologne; but the poor little unfortunates did not suffer the less, for if they did not cry when their master beat them, it was because they feared to be beaten still more. As for going and complaining to the dean, they never had such an idea. For the fifteen sous

which each of the little boys was obliged to bring him, Cut-in-Two fed, lodged, and clothed them. At night a piece of black bread, the same for breakfast—that was the way he fed them; he never gave them any clothes—that was the way he clothed them; and he shut them up at night pell-mell with their beasts, on the same straw, in a garret to which they clambered by a ladder and through a trap-door—and that was the way he lodged them. Once the beasts and children all housed, he took away the ladder and locked the trap-door with a key. You may imagine the noise and uproar which these apes, Indian hogs, foxes, mice, tortoises, marmots, and children, made without any light in this garret. Cut-in-Two slept in a room underneath, having his large ape Gargousse tied to the foot of his bed. When the noise was too loud in the garret, the owner of the beasts arose, took a large whip, mounted the ladder without a light, opened the trap, and lashed away at random. As he always had some fifteen boys, and some of them brought, (the innocents,) as much as twenty sous a day, Cut-in-Two, his expenses paid, and they were not heavy, had for himself about four or five francs each day; with that he frolicked, for note well that he was the greatest drinker on the earth, and was regularly dead drunk once every day. It was his rule, he said; except for that he would have the headache all day long, it must be said, also, that from his gains he bought sheep's hearts for Gargousse, the big ape eating raw meat like a voracious animal.

"But I see that you ask for Gringalet; here he is." "Ah! let us see Gringalet, and then I'll go and eat my soup," said the keeper. The Skeleton exchanged a look of ferocious satisfaction with the Gros-Boiteux. "Among the children to whom Cut-in-Two distributed his beasts," resumed Pique-Vinaigre, "there was a poor little devil nick-named Gringalet. Without father or mother, sister or brother, without a home, he found himself alone—all alone in the world, where he never asked to come, and whence he could have, gone without any body caring at all about it. He was not called Gringalet, for his pleasure; he was dwarfish, and puny, and needy; no one would have given him over seven or eight years, yet he was thirteen; but if he did not look more than half his age, it was not his fault, for he had not on the average eaten more than every other day, and then so little—and so bad, that he really did very well in appearing to be seven.

"Poor fellow, I think I see him," said the prisoner in the blue cap; "there are so many like him in the streets of Paris, little starve-to-deaths." "They ought to begin to learn that trade young," replied Pique-Vinaigre, bitterly; "so that they can become used to it." "Come, go on then, make haste," said the Skeleton, gruffly; "the keeper is impatient, his soup is getting cold." "Ah, bah! never mind," answered the keeper; "I wish to make a little more acquaintnance with Gringalet; it is amusing." "Really, I think it is very interesting," said Germain, attentive to the story. "Ah, thank you! for what you say, my capitalist; that gives me more pleasure than your ten sous." "Thunder of a laggard!" cried the Skeleton, "will you have done keeping us waiting?" "Now then!" answered Pique-Vinaigre. "One day Cut-in-Two had picked up Gringalet in the street, dying with cold and hunger; he would have done just as well to let him alone and die. As Gringalet was feeble, he was afraid; and as he was cowardly, he became the laughing-stock and scapegoat of his companions, who beat him, and caused him so much misery, that he would have been very wicked, if strength and courage had not failed him. But, no: when they beat him, he cried, saying, 'I have done no harm to any one, yet every one harms me—it is unjust. Oh! if I were but strong and bold!' You think, perhaps, that Gringalet was going to add, 'I would return to others the evil they did me.' Well, no! not at all: he said, 'Oh! if I were strong and bold, I would defend the weak against the strong; for I am weak, and the strong make me suffer.' In the mean time, as he was too much of a pigmy to prevent the strong from molesting the weak, he prevented the larger beasts from injuring the smaller ones." "There's a funny idea!" said the prisoner in the blue cap. "And, what is still more funny," replied the story-teller, "is, that, with this idea, one would have said, that Gringalet consoled himself for being beaten; and that proves that, at the bottom, he had not a bad heart." "I think so," said the keeper. "Devil of a Pique-Vinaigre, is'nt he amusing?" At this moment, the clock struck half past three. The Skeleton and Gros-Boiteux exchanged significant glances.

The hour advanced, the keeper did not retire, and some of the least hardened prisoners seemed almost to forget the sinister projects of the Skeleton against Germain, who listened with eagerness to the recital of Pique-Vinaigre.

"When I say," he resumed, "that Gringalet prevented the larger beasts from eating the smaller ones you will please understand, that Gringalet did not go and interfere in the affairs of the tigers, lions, wolves, or even the foxes and apes of the menagerie of Cut-in-two—he was two cowardly for that; but as soon as he saw, for example, a spider concealed in his web, to catch a poor foolish fly that was buzzing about gaily in the sun, without hairmng any one, crack! Gringalet gave a sweep into the web, delivered the fly, and crushed the spider, like a real Cæsar. Thus, Gringalet, in overcoming the alarm which spiders caused him, to prevent the flies from being eaten, showed himself—" "Showed himself as bold, in his way, as a man who would have attacked a wolf, to take from him a lamb of the fold," said the prisoner in the blue cap. "Or as a man would have attacked Cut-in-Two, to drag Gringalet from his claws," added Barbillon, also much interested. "As you say," replied Pique-Vinaigre. "Accordingly, after these doings, Gringalet did not feel so very unfortunate. He who never laughed, smiled, looked wise, put on his cap sideways, (when he had a cap), and sang the Marseillaise with a trumpet air. At such times, there was not a spider that dared to look him in the face. Another time it was a cricket that was drowning and struggling in a gutter; quickly Gringalet bravely plunged two of his fingers into the waves, and caught the cricket, which he afterwards placed on a blade of grass: a master swimmer with a medal, who should have fished up his tenth drowned person, at fifty francs the head, could not have been more proud than Gringalet, when he saw his cricket kick and run away. And yet the cricket gave him neither money nor a medal, and not even said thank you, nor did the fly. But then, Pique-Vinaigre, my friend, will you say what kind of pleasure Gringalet, whom every one beats, could find in being the deliverer of crickets and executioner of spiders! Since others injured him, why did he not revenge himself in doing harm according to his strength? for example, by causing the flies to be eaten by spiders, or in letting the crickets drown themselves; or even drowning them himself?" "Yes, exactly; why did he not revenge himself in that way?" said Nicholas. "What good would that have done him?" said another. "Why, to do harm, because others harmed him!" "No! as for me, I can comprehend why he liked to save the flies, poor little fellow!" answered the man with the blue cap.

"He thought, perhaps, 'Who knows that some one will not save me in the same way?'" "The comrade is right," cried Pique-Vinaigre; "he had read in his heart what I was about to explain to the honourable company. Gringalet was not malicious; he saw no farther than the end of his nose; but he said to himself, 'Cut-in-Two is my spider; perhaps one day somebody will do for me what I do for the flies; they will break up his web, and snatch me from his claws.' For, until then, on no account would he have dared to run away from his master; he would have thought himself stone dead. Yet, one day, when neither he nor his tortoise had had any luck, and they had only earned two or three sous, Cut-in-Two began to whip the poor child so hard, that Gringalet could stand it no longer. Tired of being the butt and martyr of everybody, he watched the moment when the trap-door was open, and while Cut-in-Two was feeding his beasts, he slipped down the ladder."

"Ah! so much the better," said a prisoner. "But why did he not go and complain to the dean?" said the blue cap; "he would have given Cut-in-Two his change." "Yes, but he did not dare; he was so much afraid he preferred to run away. Unfortunately, Cut-in-Two had seen him; he caught him by the throat, and carried him back to the garret; this time, Gringalet, on thinking of what he had to expect, shuddered from head to foot, for he was not at the end of his troubles. Gargousse, the favourite ape was larger than Gringalet, judge what a size for an ape. Now I am going to tell you why they did not lead him as a show through the streets, like the other beasts of the menagerie; it was because Gargousse was so wicked and so strong that, among all the children, there was only an Auvergnat of fourteen, a resolute fellow, who, after having several times collared and fought with Gargousse, had succeeded in mastering him, and leading him by a chain; and even then, there was often battles between them, and bloody ones, too, I tell you. Tired of this, the little Auvergnat said one day, 'Well, I will revenge myself on you, scamp of an ape!' So one morning he set off with his beast, as usual; to decoy him, he bought a sheep's heart: while Gargousse was eating, he passed a cord through the end of his chain, and fastened it to a tree, and when he had the scoundrel of an ape once tied, he poured on him such a torrent of blows! a torrent that fire could not have extinguished."

"Ah! well done!" "Bravo! the Auvergnat!" "Hit hard, my boy!" "Break his back for him, the rascally Gargousse," said the prisoners. "And he did lay it on with a good heart," answered Pique-Viniagre. "You should have heard how Gargousse cried, seen how he gnashed his teeth, jumped, danced here and there; but the Auvergnat trimmed him up with his club, saying, 'Do you like it? here is some more.' Unfortunately, apes are like cats, they have nine lives. Gargousse was as cunning as he was wicked. When he saw what kind of wood was burning for him, at the very thickest moment of the torrents he cut a last caper, fell flat down at the foot of the tree, kicked a moment, and then shammed dead, not budging any more than a log. The Auvergnat wished nothing more; believing the ape done for, he cleared out, never to put his feet in Cut-in-Two's abode again. But the vagabond of a Gargousse watched him out of the corner of his eye, all wounded as he was, and as soon as he saw himself alone, and the Auvergnat at a distance, he gnawed the cord with his teeth. The Boulevard Marceau, where he had had his dance, was very near Pologne; the ape knew his road well; he slowly went off then, crawling along, and arrived at his master's, who swore and foamed to see his favourite ape thus served out. But this is not all; from that moment Gargousse had preserved such furious spite against all children in general, that Cut-in-Two who was not very tender-hearted, had not dared to let any of them lead him, for fear of an accident; for Gargousse would have been capable of strangling or devouring a child; and the little fellows would rather have allowed themselves to be slashed by Cut-in-Two than approach the ape."

"I must most decidedly go and eat my soup," said the keeper, making a movement towards the door. "the devil of a Pique-Vinaigre would make the birds come down from the trees to hear him. I do not know where he has fished up this story." "At length the keeper is off," whispered Skeleton to Gros-Boiteux; "I am in a sweat—I have a fever, so much do I burn within. "Ah be good boys," said the keeper, going towards the door. "Good as images," answered Skeleton, drawing near Germain, while the Gros-Boiteux and Nicolas at a concerted signal made two steps in the same direction. "Ah! respectable keeper, you are going away at the finest moment," said Pique-Vinaigre, with

an air of reproach. Except for the Gros-Boiteux, who prevented his movement by seizing his arm, the Skeleton had sprung upon Pique-Vinaigre. "How! at the finest moment?" answered the keeper, returning towards the Story-teller. "I think so," said Pique-Vinaigre; "you do not know all you are going to lose; the most charming part of my story is about to commence." "Do not listen to it, then," said the Skeleton, with difficulty restraining his rage; "he is not in the vein to-day: as for me, I find his story abominably stupid." "My story stupid?" cried Pique-Vinaigre, his vanity wounded; "well, keeper, I supplicate you to remain to the end. I have only enough to fill a good quarter of an hour; besides, your soup is cold. Now, what do you risk? I will hasten on with my story, so that you may still have the time to go and eat before we go to our beds." "Well, then, I remain, but make haste," said the keeper, drawing near. "And you are right to remain, for, without boasting, you have never heard anything like it—above all, the conclusion; there is the triumph of the ape and of Gringalet, escorted by all the little beast conductors and inhabitants of La Petite Pologne. My word of honour, I do not say it from vanity, but it is superb." "Then go on, my boy," said the keeper, coming close to the stove. The Skeleton trembled with rage. He almost despaired of accomplishing his crime. Once the hour of repose arrived, Germain was saved; for he did not sleep in the same ward with his implacable enemy, and the next day, as we have said, he was to occupy one of the vacant cells.

And moreover, he saw from the interruptions of several of the prisoners, that they found themselves, thanks to the story of Pique-Vinaigre, filled with ideas that softened their hearts; perhaps, then, they would not assist in the accomplishment of a frightful murder, of which their presence would make them accomplices.

The Skeleton could prevent the Story-teller from finishing his story, but then his last hope vanished of seeing the keeper retire before the hour in which Germain could be in safety. "Ah! it is stupid, is it?" said Pique-Vinaigre. "Well! you shall be the judge.

"There was not then an animal more wicked than the large ape Gargousse, which was, above all, as savage as his master towards children. What did Cut-in-Two do to punish Gringalet for wishing to run away? In the mean time he caught the child, shut

him up in the garret, saying to him, 'To-morrow morning, when all your comrades are gone, I will take hold of you, and you shall see what I do to those who wish to run away from here.' I leave you to imagine what a horrible night Gringalet passed. He hardly closed his eyes: he asked himself what Cut-in-Two would do. At length he fell asleep. But what a sleep! then there was a dream, a frightful dream.

"He dreamed that he was one of those poor flies which he had so often saved from the spider's web, and that he, in his turn, fell into a large and strong web, where he struggled with all his strength without being able to escape; then he saw coming towards him, softly, cautiously, a kind of monster which had the face of Cut-in-Two on a spider's body. Unfortunately, Gringalet awoke with a start, and he saw not the end of his dream. 'As the night advanced, his fear returned so strongly that in the end he forgot his dream, or, rather, he only remembered the frightful part of it; the great web where he had been entangled, and the spider with the face of Cut-in-Two. You can judge what shiverings of alarm he must have had. Judge then, all alone—with no one to take his part! In the morning, when he saw the light appear little by little through the garret window, his alarm redoubled; the moment was drawing nearer when he would be left all alone with Cut-in-Two. Then he threw himself on his knees in the middle of the garret, and weeping hot tears, he begged his companions to ask his pardon from Cut-in-Two; or to assist him to escape, if there was any way. Oh! yes! some from fear of the master, others from caring nothing about it, others from cruelty, refused the service which poor Gringalet demanded."

"Wicked scrubs!" said the prisoner in the blue cap; "they had neither body nor soul!" "It is true," said another; "it is vexing to see this want of feeling." "And alone, and without defence," resumed the prisoner in the blue cap; "for one who cannot stretch out his neck without wincing it is always a pity. When one has teeth to bite, then it is different. Faith, you have tusks? Well, show them, and look for my tail, my cadet!" "That is true!" said several of the prisoners. "Ah!" cried the Skeleton, no longer able to restrain his rage, and addressing the blue cap, "will you not be still? have I not already said, Silence! Am I, or am I not, the Captain here?" For sole answer, the blue cap looked him in the face, and then made a gesture, perfectly

well known to the rogues of Paris. The blue cap accompanied this mute answer with an expression so grotesque that several of the prisoners shouted with laughter, while some of the others, on the contrary, remained stupified at the audacity of the new prisoner. The Skeleton shook his fist at the blue cap, and said, grinding his teeth, "We'll settle this to-morrow." "And I will make the addition on your hide. I'll set down seventeen and carry nought." For fear the keeper should find a new reason for remaining, in order to prevent a possible quarrel, he answered calmly— "That is not the question. I have the superintendence of the lodge, and I must be obeyed; is it not so, keeper?" "It is true," said the officer. "Do not interrupt. And you, Pique-Vinaigre go on; but make haste my boy."

CHAPTER XXIII.

CONTINUATION OF THE STORY OF GRINGALET.

"THEN," resumed Pique-Vinaigre, continuing his story, "Gringalet, seeing himself abandoned, gave himself up to his unhappy fate. Broad daylight came, and all the children prepared to depart with their beasts. Cut-in-Two opened the trap and called the roll, in order to give each one his piece of bread; all descended the ladder, and Gringalet, more dead than alive, crouched in a corner of the garret, moved no more than it did; he saw his companions going off, one after the other; he would have given any thing to do as they did. Finally, they were all gone. The heart of the poor child beat strongly; he hoped that, perhaps, his master would forget him. Ah, well, he heard Cut-in-Two, who was at the bottom of the ladder, cry in a harsh voice, 'Gringalet.' 'Here I am, master.' 'Come down, at once, or I'll fetch you,' answered he. Gringalet thought his last day was come. 'Alas!' he said to himself, trembling in every limb, and remembering his dream, 'now you are in the toils, little fly; the spider is going to eat you.' After having placed his tortoise softly on the ground, he bade him adieu, for he had become attached to the creature, and approached the trap-door. He placed his foot on the ladder to descend, when Cut-in-Two taking him by his poor little thin leg, as slender as a spindle, drew him

so strongly, so harshly, that Gringalet tumbled down, and polished his face against the whole length of the ladder." "What a pity that the dean of Petite Pologne had not been there; what a fine dance for Cut-in-Two," said the blue cap; "it is in such times as these that it is good to be strong." "Yes, my boy; but, unfortunately, the dean was not there. Cut-in-Two took the child by the seat of his trowsers, and carried him into his den, where he kept his big ape tied to the foot of his bed. On seeing the child, the beast began to leap, and grind his teeth like a mad thing, and to spring the whole length of his chain, as if he wished to devour him." "Poor Gringalet, how did he get out of this?" "But if he had fallen into the clutches of the ape, he would have been strangled at once." "Thunder! it makes me half dead," said the blue cap; "as for me, at this moment, I could not harm a fly; and you, friends?" "Faith! nor I either." "Nor I." At this moment the clock struck three quarters past three. The Skeleton, fearing more and more that time would be wanting, cried, furious at these interruptions, which seemed to indicate that several of the prisoners were becoming softened, "Silence! He will never finish this story if you talk as much as he does." Pique-Vinaigre continued: "When one reflects that Gringalet had had all the trouble in the world to become accustomed to his tortoise, and that the most courageous of his comrades trembled at the name alone of Gargousse, let him imagine his terror when he saw himself carried by his master near to this devil of an ape. 'Pardon, master,' he cried, his teeth chattering as if he had an ague, 'pardon, master; I will never do it again, I promise you.' The poor little féllow cried 'I will never do it again,' without knowing why he said so, for he had nothing to reproach himself with; but Cut-in-Two laughed at that. In spite of the cries of the child, who struggled hard, he placed him within reach of Gargousse, and the beast sprang upon him and clutched him." A shudder passed through the audience, who were more and more attentive. "How stupid would I have been to go away;" said the keeper, approaching still nearer. "And this is nothing, yet; the finest has yet to come," answered Pique-Vinaigre. "As soon as Gringalet felt the cold and hairy paws of the great ape, which seized him by the throat and by the head, he thought himself devoured, became as it were delirious, and began to cry

with groans which would have softened a tiger. 'The spider of my dream, good Lord! help, help!' 'Will you hush?' said Cut-in-Two, giving him heavy kicks, for he was afraid that his cries would be heard; but at the end of a moment there was no more danger; poor Gringalet cried no more, struggled no more; on his knees, as white as a sheet, he shut his eyes, and shivered as if it had been January. Meantime the ape beat him, pulled his hair, and scratched him; and from time to time the wicked beast stopped to look at his master, absolutely as if they understood each other. As for Cut-in-Two, he laughed so loud, that if Gringalet had cried, the shouts of his master would have drowned his cries. It would seem as if this encouraged Gargousse, for he was more and more cruel to the child." "Ah, cried the blue cap, "If I had held you by the tail, I would have spun you round like a mill—just like a sling, and I would have cracked your pate on the pavement." "Rascally ape! he was as wicked as a man!" "There are no men so wicked as that." "Not so wicked?" answered Pique-Vinaigre. "Judge of it; this is what he did afterward; he unfastened the chain, which was very long, from the bed, took the child, more dead than alive from the paws of Gargousse, and fastened him at one end of it, with Gargousse at the other. There was an invention." "It is true there are men more cruel than the most cruel beasts." "When Cut-in-Two had done this, he said to his ape, which appeared to understand him, 'Attention, Gargousse, they have led and shown you, now in your turn, you shall show Gringalet; he shall be your ape. Come, hop; stand up, Gringalet, or I say to Gargousse, 'speak to him, fellow.' The poor child had fallen on his knees, his hands clasped, but not able to speak; his teeth chattered in his head. 'Hold! make him walk, Gargousse,' said Cut-in-Two to his ape, 'and if he is cross, do as I do.' And at the same time he gave the child a torrent of blows with a switch, and afterward handed it to the ape. You know how these animals imitate by nature, but Gargousse in this respect excelled; so he took the rod in his hand and fell upon Gringalet, who was obliged to get up. Once on his legs, he was about the same size as the ape; then Cut-in-Two went out of his room, and descended the staircase, calling Gargousse, and Gargousse followed him, driving Gringalet before him with blows from the rod. They

reached thus the little court of the building of Cut-in-Two. There he counted on amusing himself; he shut the door leading into the lane, and signed to Gargousse to make the child run before him around the court, by striking him with the switch. The ape obeyed, and began to chase Gringalet in this manner, while Cut-in-Two held his sides with laughter. You think that this wickedness was enough? Oh, yes, but it was nothing as yet. Up to this time Gringalet would have escaped with a few scratches, lashes and horrible fear. Now this is what Cut-in-Two did. To make the ape furious against the child, who, panting and out of breath, was more dead than alive, he took Gringalet by the hair, pretended to belabour him with blows, and then he handed him back to Gargousse, crying, 'Speak to him!' and then he showed him a piece of sheep's heart, as much as to say to him, 'This shall be your reward!' Oh, then, my friends, truly it was a dreadful sight. Imagine a great red ape with a black snout, grinding his teeth like a madman, and throwing himself furiously on this poor little unfortunate, who, not being able to defend himself, had been thrown down at the first blow, and lay with his face to the ground, in order to protect it. Seeing this, Gargousse, his master setting him at the child continually, mounted on his back, took him by the neck, and fell to biting him, until he made the blood come. 'Oh, the spider of my dream! the spider!' cried Gringalet in a stifled voice, believing now that he was going to be killed. Suddenly there was a knock at the door; rap, rap, rap!" "Ah! the dean!' cried the prisoners with joy. "Yes; this time it was he, my friends; he called through the door, 'Will you open, Cut-in-Two? will you open? Do not sham deaf; for I see you through the keyhole.' Forced to reply, he went grumbling to open the door, for the dean, who was as solid as a bridge, in spite of his fifty years, and with whom it was not worth one's while to joke when he was angry. 'What do you want with me?' said Cut-in-Two to him, half opening the door. 'I want to speak to you,' said the dean, who entered almost by force into the little court; then, seeing the ape still savage after Gringalet, he ran, caught Gargousse by the neck, and tried to take the child away from under him; but he only then saw that the child was chained to the ape. Seeing this he looked at Cut-in-Two in a terrible manner, and cried, 'Come, then, at once, and unchain this poor unfortunate?'

"You can judge of the joy and surprise of Gringalet, who, half dead with fright, found himself saved as it were by a miracle." "Now," said the keeper, making a step towards the door; "now Gringalet is saved, I go to eat my soup." "Saved?" cried Pique-Vinaigre, "oh! yes, saved! he is not yet at the end of his troubles, poor Gringalet." "Really?" said several of the prisoners, with interest. "But what is going to happen to him now?" asked the keeper, drawing near. "Remain, and you shall know," answered the Story-teller. "Devil of a Pique-Vinaigre, he does with one just as he pleases," said the keeper; "faith, I remain a little longer." The Skeleton, mute, foamed with rage. Pique-Vinaigre continued: "Cut-in-Two who feared the dean as he did fire, had, grumbling, loosened the child from the chain; when, that was done, the dean threw Gargousse into the air, received him on the end of a most magnificent kick, and sent him sprawling ten feet. The ape cried like a burned child, gnashed his teeth, but he fled quickly, and went to take refuge on the top of a shed, where he shook his fist at the dean. 'Why do you beat my ape?' said Cut-in-Two to the dean. 'You ought rather ask me, why I do not beat you, to cause this child such sufferings! You are drunk pretty early this morning?' 'I am no more drunk than you are; I was teaching a trick to my ape; I wish to give a representation where he and Gringalet will appear together. I am following my business—why do you meddle with it?' 'I meddle with what concerns me. This morning, not seeing Gringalet pass before my door with the other children, I asked them where he was; they did not answer—they looked embarrassed. I knew you. I thought you were after no good, and I was not wrong. Listen to me: every time I do not see Gringalet pass before my door with the others in the morning, I will be here at once, and you must show him to me, or—I'll knock you down.' 'I will do as I please; I have no orders to receive from you,' answered he, irritated at this threat. 'You shall not knock me down; and if you do not take yourself off from this, or if you return,—' Flip-flap went the dean, interrupting him by a duet of blows enough to silence a rhinoceros: 'There is what you get for answering in this manner to the dean of La Petite Pologne." "Two blows! it was too little," said the blue cap; "in the dean's place, I should have given him a dozen." "And he should not have had it too hastily," added a prisoner. "The dean," replied

Pique-Vinaigre, "could have beaten ten like him. So he was obliged to put these blows in his pocket; but he was none the less furious at being struck, and, above all, before Gringalet. Thus, at this very moment, he promised to avenge himself, and an idea occurred to him which could only have occurred to a demon of wickedness like himself. While he wasrum inating on this diabolical idea, the dean said. 'Remember, that if you attempt to injure this child again, I will force you to clear out from La Petite Pologne, you and your beasts; otherwise I will stir up the neighbourhood against you; you know they hate you here, so you will have a passport which your back will remember, I promise you.' Traitor as he was, in order to be able to execute his wicked idea, instead of continuing to be angry with the dean, he cringed like a dog, and said. 'Faith! you were wrong to strike me, and to think that I wished any harm to Gringalet; on the contrary, I repeat to you, that I was teaching a new trick to my ape; he is not sweet tempered when he is angry, and if, in the scuffle, the little one was bitten I am sorry for it.' 'Hum!' said the dean, looking at him from the corner of his eye, it is this really true that you tell me? If you wish to teach a trick to your ape, why did you fasten him to Gringalet?'

'Because Gringalet must know it. This is what I wish to do; I will dress Gargousse in a red coat and a cap with feathers; I will seat Gringalet in a child's chair; then I will put a towel around his neck, and the ape, with a large wooden razor, will pretend to shave him.'

'The dean could not keep from laughing at this idea. 'Is it not a farce!' said Cut-in-Two with a smirking look. 'In truth it is a farce,' said the dean; so much the more, as they say your ape is sufficiently cunning and knowing to play such a part." "I think so. When he has seen me five or six times pretend to shave Gringalet, he will imitate me with his large wooden razor; but on that account, as the child must become used to him, I have tied them together' 'But why have you chosen Gringalet rather than any other?' 'Because he is the smallest of all, and, being seated, Gargousse will be larger than he is; besides, I intend to give half of the profits to Gringalet.' 'If this is so,' said the dean, reassured by the hypocrisy of the owner of the beasts, 'I regret the twist I gave you; consider it as an advance.' 'While his mas-

ter spoke with the dean, Gringalet dared not breathe; he trembled like a leaf, and longed to throw himself at the feet of the dean and beg to be taken away; but his courage failed, and he began again to despair, saying to himself, 'I shall be like the poor fly of my dream—the spider will devour me.' 'Courage! my boy; since he gives you half of the money, that ought to encourage you to accustom yourself to the ape. Bah! bah! you will do it; and if the profits are large, you will have no cause to complain.' 'He complain! Have you any reason to complain?' asked his master, giving him a side look so terrible that the child wished he was a hundred feet under ground. 'No, no, my master:' he stammered. 'You see, he never has complained; I only wish for his welfare, after all. If Gargousse scratched him the first time, it shall not happen again, I promise you. I will watch.' 'Very well! Thus every one will be content.' Gringalet the most,' said Cut-in-Two, 'is it not so?' 'Yes, yes, master,' said the trembling child. 'And to console you for your scratches, I will give you part of a good breakfast; for the dean is going to send a plate of cutlets and pickles, four bottles of wine, and a gallon of brandy.' 'At your service: my cellar and my kitchen shine for the whole world.' At heart, the dean was a good man, but he was not very wise, and he loved to sell his wine and his cutlets also. The rascal Cut-in-Two knew it well; you see that he sent him off contented at having sold some eatables and drinkables, and re-assured as to the fate of Gringalet. So, now, here is the poor little fellow fallen again into the power of his master. The moment the dean had turned on his heels, he showed the staircase to his victim, and ordered him to mount at once to his garret; the child did not allow him to say it twice but went, very much alarmed. 'Oh, Lord I am lost,' he cried throwing himself upon the straw beside his tortoise, and weeping bitterly. He was there for a good hour, sobbing, when he heard the coarse voice of Cut-in-Two calling him. That which increased the fear of Gringalet was that it seeemed to him the voice of his master had a strange sound. 'Will you come down at once?' said the owner of the beast, with a horrid oath.

"The child quickly descended the stairs. Hardly had he put his foot on the ground, when his master seized him, and carried him to his chamber, staggering at each step, for he had drunk so much—so much, that he was as tipsy as a sow, and could hardly keep on his legs: his body swayed backward and forward, and he

looked at Gringalet, rolling his eyes in a most ferocious manner, but without speaking. He had, as the saying is, his tongue too thick. Never had the child been more afraid of him. "Gargousse was chained to the foot of the bed. "In the middle of the room was a chair with a cord hanging on the back.

"Gringalet seated himself trembling. Then, without saying a word, he wound the cord around him, and tied him to the chair and that not easily; for although the owner of the beasts could still see a little, and knew what he was about, you may imagine he made double knots. At length, Gringalet was firmly fastened in the chair. 'My God!' he murmured. 'This time no one will come to deliver me'. Poor little fellow! he was right; no one could—no one did come, as you will see. The dean had gone, and Cut-in-Two had double locked the door of the court on the inside, and drawn the bolt: no one could come there to the aid of Gringalet." "Oh! this time," said several of the prisoners, much interested in the story, "Gringalet you are lost." "Poor little fellow!" "What a pity!" "If it only needed twenty sous to save him, I would give them." "I also." "Rascal! what is he going to do?" Pique-Vinaigre continued: "When Gringalet was tied to the chair his master said to him, 'Rascal it is you who have been the cause that—that I have been beaten—you are—go-o-o-ing to die!' And he drew from his pocket a large razor, newly sharpened, opened it, and took with one hand Gringalet by the hair." A murmur of indignation and horror circulated among the prisoners, and interrupted for a moment Pique-Vinaigre, who resumed: "At the sight of the razor the child began to cry, 'Pardon! master, pardon! do not kill me!' 'Cry; boy, you will not cry long,' answered he. 'Help!' cried poor Gringalet, almost delirious, recalling to his mind his dream; 'here is the spider that is going to kill me!' 'Ah! you call—me—a spider! said he; , on account—of—that—and other things, you—are—going to die—do you hear—but—not by my hand—because that—the thing—and, besides they will guillotine me. I will say—and—prove—that it was the ape—I have prepared—but no matter!' said he, hardly able to stand; then, calling his ape, which, at the end of his chain, ground his teeth, and looked alternately at his master and the child. 'Look here, Gargousse,' he said, shewing him the razor and Gringalet whom he held by the hair, 'you must do so to him; you see?' And passing the back of the razor several

times over the throat of Gringalet, he pretended to cut it. The ape was such a good imitator, so wicked, and so malicious, that he comprehended what his master wished and, to prove it to him, took his chin with the left paw, threw his head back, and pretended to cut his throat. 'That's it, Gargousse; that's it,' said he, stammering, shutting his eyes, and reeling so much that he came near falling with Gringalet and the chair. 'Yes, that's it; I'll unfasten your chain—cut his whistle—that's it; hey, Gargousse?'

"The ape cried and chattered, as if to say yes, and put out his paw to take the razor, which Cut-in-Two held towards him. 'Help!' murmured Gringalet in a dying tone, certain now that his hour was come. Alas? he called for assistance, without any hope that any would come; but he said as one says 'My God! help!' when one is drowning. Just at this moment, Gringalet saw come in at the window one of those small flies, green and gold, which are so common; one would have called it a spark of fire which flew, and just at the moment when Cut-in-Two gave the razor to Gargousse, the golden gnat flew straight into the eye of this wicked brigand. A fly in the eye is no great thing; but for a moment it pains like a prick with a needle; thus Cut-in-Two, who could hardly stand, fell on the floor and rolled like a log to the foot of where Gargousse was chained. 'Golden gnat, I thank you; you have saved me!' cried Gringalet; for, still seated, and tied on the chair, he had seen everything." "It is true enough, the golden gnat prevented his throat from being cut," cried the prisoners transported with joy. "Long live the golden gnat!" cried the blue cap "Yes, long live the golden gnat!" repeated several voices. "Long live Pique-Vinaigre and his stories!" said another. "Stop, then," resumed he, "here's the finest and most terrible part of the history that I had promised you." "Cut-in-Two had fallen on the ground like lead; he was so drunk that he stirred no more than a log; he was dead drunk, and knew nothing but in falling he came near crushing Gargousse, and had almost broken one of his hind paws. "You know how wicked this villanous beast was—rancorous and malicious. He held on to the razor which his master had given him to cut the throat of Gringalet. What does the ape when he sees his master stretched on his back, immovable as a fried carp, and much at his ease? He sprang upon him, crouched on his breast, with one of his paws stretched the skin of his throat and with the other, he cut his windpipe in a moment exactly as he

had shown how to operate on Gringalet. "Bravo!" "Well done!" "Long live Gargousse!" "Long live the little golden gnat!" "Long live Gringalet!" cried the prisoners with enthusiasm. "Well, my friends!" cried Pique-Vinaigre enchanted at the success of his story; "what you have just cried, all La Petite Pologne cried an hour after." "How is that—how?" "I told you that, to do this bloody deed quite at his ease, he had locked the door on the inside. In the evening the children returned, one after the other with their beasts; the first knocked—no answer; at length when they were all assembled, they knocked again—no reply: one of them went after the dean, and told him that they had knocked, and that their master did not open the door. 'The rogue is as drunk as an Englishman,' said he. 'I sent him some wine just now; we must break open the door; these children cannot remain all night out of doors.' They break open the doors, they enter, they mount the stairs, they reach the chamber, and what do they see? Gargousse, chained and crouching on the body of his master, and playing with the razor; poor Gringalet, happily out of his reach, still seated, and tied on the chair, not daring to cast his eyes on the dead body, and looking at—guess what! The little golden fly, which, after having fluttered around the child, as if to felicitate him, had finally come and seated itself on his little hand. Gringalet related all to the dean, and to the crowd who followed him; this appeared truly, as they said, an act of Providence; then the dean said, 'A triumph to Gringalet: a triumph to Gargousse, who has killed this bad brigand Cut-in-Two. He cut others; it was his turn to be cut!' "'Yes, yes!' said the crowd, for the defunct was detested by everybody, 'a triumph for Gargousse! a triumph for Gringalet.' It was night; they lighted torches of straw, they tied Gargousse on a bench which four boys carried on their shoulders; the ape did not appear to dislike this, and assumed the airs of a conquerer, by showing his teeth to the crowd. After the ape came the dean, carrying Gringalet in his arms: all the little boys, each with his beast, surrounded the dean; those who played on the hurdy-gurdy; there were coalmen, chimneysweeps, with their bagpipes who also played: it was a noise, a joy, a fête which cannot be imagined! Behind the musicians came all the inhabitants of La Petite Pologne, men, women, and children; they all held in their hands torches of straw and shouted like madmen. The cortége in this order marched round the house. It was a droll spec-

tacle; these old buildings and all these figures illuminated by the red light of the straw fires, which flickered and sparkled, and blazed up! As to Gringalet the first thing that he did, once at liberty was to place the little golden fly in a paper box."

The recital of Pique-Vinaigre was interrupted. "Eh! Rousel," cried a voice from without, "come, then, and eat your soup; four o'clock will strike in a few minutes." "Faith! the story is about finished, I'll go." "Thank you, my boy, you have amused me finely; you may be proud of it," said the keeper to Pique-Vinaigre, going towards the door. Then stopping, "Ah! be good boys," he said to the prisoners, turning around. "We are going to hear the end of the story," said the Skeleton, almost bursting with restrained rage. Then he whispered to the Gros-Boiteux, "Go to the door, look after the keeper, and when you see him go out of the court, cry 'Gargousse!' and the spy is dead." "Just so," said the Gros-Boiteux, who accompanied the keeper, and remained standing near the door, watching him. "I told you, then," said Pique-Vinaigre, "that Gringalet, all the time of his triumph, said to himself, 'Little gnats, I have—'" "Gargousse!" cried the Gros-Boiteux. "Mine! Gringalet. I will be your spider!" shouted the Skeleton, throwing himself on Germain so that he could neither make a movement nor utter a cry. His voice died under the formidable grasp of the long iron fingers of the Skeleton.

CHAPTER XXIV.

AN UNKNOWN FRIEND.

"If you are the spider, I will be the golden gnat, Skeleton of evil!" cried a voice at the moment when Germain, surprised by the violent and sudden attack of his enemy, fell backward on his bench, at the mercy of the brigand, who, with one knee on his breast, held him by the throat. "Yes, I will be the gnat, and what is more, a famous gnat!" repeated the man in the blue cap, of whom we have spoken; then, with a furious bound, overturning three or four prisoners who separated him from Germain, he sprang upon the Skeleton, and struck on his head and between his eyes such a torrent of blows with his fists that the sound was like that of a hammer on an anvil.

The man in the blue cap, who was no other than the Chouri-

neur, added as he redoubled the rapidity of his hammering:— "It is the hail storm of fisticuffs which Rodolphe planted on my skull. I have learned the trick." At this unexpected assault, the prisoners were struck with surprise, taking no part for or against the Chourineur. Many of them still under the salutary impression of the story of Pique-Vinaigre, were even satisfied at this incident which might save Germain. The Skeleton, at first stunned, staggered like an ox under the butcher's axe; extended his hands mechanically to ward off the blows of his enemy. Germain was enabled to disengage himself from the mortal gripe, and half arose. "But what is all this? who is this brigand?" cried Gros-Boiteux; and springing upon the Chourineur, he tried to seize his arms from behind, while the latter endeavoured to hold down the Skeleton on the bench. The defender of Germain answered the attack of the Gros-Boiteux by a kind of kick, so violent, that he sent him rolling to the extremity of the circle formed by the prisoners. Germain of a livid paleness, half suffocated, kneeling beside the bench, did not appear to have any consciousness of what was passing around him. The strangulation had been so violent and so painful that he hardly breathed. After he had recovered a little, the Skeleton, by a desperate effort, succeeded in shaking off the Chourineur, and getting upon his feet. Panting, drunk with rage and hatred, he was frightful. His cadaverous face streamed with blood, his upper lip, drawn back like a mad wolf's, displayed his teeth closely set against each other. At length he cried in a voice breathless with anger and fatigue, for his struggle with the Chourineur had been violent, "Cut him down, then, this brigand, cowards! who let me be attacked traitorously, or the spy will escape." During this kind of truce, the Chourineur, raising the half-fainting Germain, had skilfully manœuvred to approach by degrees an angle of the wall, where he had placed his protegé. Profiting by this excellent disposition of defence, the Chourineur could then, without fear of being attacked from behind, hold out a long time against the prisoners, on whom the courage and Herculean strength which he had just displayed made a powerful impression. Pique-Vinaigre, alarmed had disappeared during the tumult, without any one remarking his absence. Seeing the hesitation of the greater part of the prisoners, the Skeleton said, "Come on then! let us do the job for both them." "Take care;" answered the Chourineur, preparing for the combat; "look out for yourself, Skeleton! If you wish to play Cut-

in-Two, I will play Gargousse—I'll cut your throat." "Why don't you jump on him?" cried Gros-Boiteux. "Why does this madman defend the spy? Death to the spy, and him also! If he defends Germain, he is a traitor." "Yes! yes! a traitor." "Death to the spy!" "Death!" "Yes; death to the traitor who defends him!" Such were the cries of several of the prisoners. A part of them, more merciful, cried, "Not before he speaks!" "Yes; let him explain!" "A man must not be killed without a hearing!" "And without a defence!" "One would be a real Cut-in-Two?" "So much the better!" answered Gros-Boiteux, and the partisans of the Skeleton. "One cannot do too much to a spy!" "To death with him!" "Fall upon him!" "Let us support the Skeleton!" "Yes, yes! down with the blue cap!" "No, let us sustain the blue cap! down with the Skeleton!" answered the party of the Chourineur. "Bravo, my lads;" cried the Chourineur, addressing those of the prisoners who ranged themselves on his side. "You have hearts; you would not see a man murdered who is half dead; only cowards are capable of such conduct. Skeleton is no bad joker; he is condemned in advance; that is the reason why he urges you on. But if you aid him to kill Germain, you will be roughly treated. Besides, I have a proposition to make. Skeleton wants to finish this young man. Well; let him take him, if he will: it will be an affair between ourselves; we will walk into each other, and you will see; but he dares not—he is like Cut-in-Two, strong amongst the weak."

The vigour, the energy, the hardy figure of the Chourineur had a powerful effect on the prisoners; a considerable number ranged themselves on his side, and surrounded Germain; the party of the Skeleton were grouped around this bandit. A bloody affray was about to take place, when the quick and measured step of a guard of infantry was heard in the court. Pique-Vinaigre, profiting by the noise and general commotion, had gained the court and knocked at the wicket, in order to inform the keepers of what was going on in the hall. The arrival of the soldiers put an end to this scene. Germain, Skeleton, and the Chourineur were conducted to the presence of the director; the first to lodge his complaint, the others to answer the charge of a fight in the prison.

The alarm and sufferings of Germain were so intense, his weakness was so great, the he was obliged to lean on two of the keepers to reach the director's room. There he became quite faint; his

excoriated throat bore the livid and bloody marks of the iron fingers of the Skeleton. A few seconds more, and the betrothed of Rigolette would have been strangled. The keeper charged with the surveillance of the prison, who was much interested for Germain, gave him every assistance. When he came to himself, when reflection succeeded to the rapid and terrible emotions that had hardly left him the exercise of his reason, his first thought was for his deliverer. "Thank you for your attentions," he said to the keeper; "but for that courageous man, I was lost." "How are you now?" "Better. Ah! all that has passed seems to me like a horrid dream!" "Recover yourself." "And he who saved me, where is he?" "In the director's room. He is telling him how the affray occurred. It appears that without him—" "I had been murdered. Oh! tell me his name—who is he?' "His name I do not know; he is nicknamed the Chourineur; he was once in the galleys." "And the crime which brought him here, perhaps, is not serious?" "Very serious—burglary," said the keeper. "He will probably have the same dose as Pique-Vinaigre; fifteen or twenty years of hard labour and the pillory, as he is a second comer." Germain shuddered; he would have preferred being bound by the ties of gratitude to one less criminal. "Ah! it is frightful," he said; "and yet this man, without knowing me, took my part. So much courage, so much generosity." "What would you have? Sometimes there is some good left in these people. The most important part is, that you are saved; to-morrow you will have your cell, and for this night you will sleep in the infirmary, according to the orders of the director. Come, courage! The worst is over; when your pretty little visiter comes to see you, you can reassure her, for, once in your cell, you will have nothing more to fear." "Oh! no, I will not speak to her about it; but I wish to thank my defender. However culpable he may be in the eyes of the law, he has none the less saved my life." "Hold! I hear him leaving the director's room. The Skeleton is now to be examined; I will take them back together, directly, the Skeleton to the dungeon, and the Chourineur to the *Fosse aux Lions*. He will, besides, be a little recompensed for what he has done for you; for as he is a bold and determined fellow, such as one should be to lead others, it is probable that he will take the place of Skeleton as Captain." The Chourineur having crossed a little lobby, on which opened the room of the director, entered the apartment where Germain

was seated. "Wait for me here," said the keeper to the Chourineur; "I am going to know what the director decides to do with the Skeleton, and I will return directly for you. There is our young man quite recovered; he wishes to thank you, and he has reason too, for without you all had been finished for him." The keeper retired. The features of the Chourineur were radiant with delight. He advanced joyfully, saying—"Thunder! how happy I am at saving you!" And he extended his hand to Germain. He, from a feeling of involuntary repulsion, at first drew back slightly instead of taking the hand offered by the Chourineur; then, recollecting that, after all, he owed his life to this man, he wished to make amends for this first movement of repugnance. But the Chourineur perceived it; a gloom spread over his face, and drawing back in his turn, he said, with much bitterness—"Ah! it is right. Pardon me." "No, it is I who should ask your pardon. Am I not a prisoner like you? I should only think of the service you have rendered me; you have saved my life. Your hand, I entreat you. I pray you, your hand." "Thank you; now it is useless. The first movement is everything. If you had at first given me your hand, that would have given me pleasure; but, on reflection it is I who do not wish it. Not because I am a prisoner, like you, but," he added, in a hesitating and gloomy manner, "because, before I was here, I was—" "The keeper has told me all," replied Germain, interrupting him; but you have none the less saved my life." "I have done but my duty and pleasure, for I know who you are, Germain." "You know me?" "A little, my nephew; I answer you as if I were your uncle!" said the Chourineur, resuming his tone of habitual carelessness; and you would be very wrong to place my arrival at *La Force* on the back of chance. If I had not known you, I should not have been here."

Germain looked at the Chourineur with the utmost surprise. "How? it is because you have known me—" "That I am here; a prisoner in *La Force*." "I wish to believe you; but—" "But you do not believe me." "I wish to say, that it is impossible for me to comprehend how it can be that I have anything to do with your imprisonment." "Have anything to do with it? You have everything." "I have this misfortune?" "A misfortune! on the contrary, it is I who am indebted to you; and very much, that is more. "To me; you indebted to me!" "Yes, for having procured me the advantage of making a tour in *La Force*." "Truly," said Germain,

passing his hand over his face, "I do not know whether the terrible shock I received has impaired my reason, but it is impossible for me to understand you. The keeper has just told me that you were accused of—" And Germain hesitated. "Of robbery! yes, burglary; and at night, into the bargain! everything under full sail," cried the Chourineur, shouting with laughter. "Nothing was wanting; my robbery had everything to recommend it."

Germain painfully affected by the audacious boldness of the Chourineur, could not prevent himself from saying, "How, you! you so brave, so generous, do you talk thus? Do you not know the terrible punishment which awaits you?"

"Twenty years in the galleys, and the pillory! I am a headstrong scoundrel, to take it so coolly? But what would you have when one is in for it? And yet to say that it is you, Germain," added the Chourineur, uttering a heavy sigh, in a manner jokingly contrite, "who are the cause of my misfortune?" "When you explain yourself more clearly, I shall understand you. Joke as much as you please, my gratitude for the service you have rendered me will be none the less," said Germain, sadly. "I ask your pardon, Germain," answered the Chourineur, becoming more serious; "you do not like to see me laugh at this; let us speak no more about it. I must have a little explanation with you, and force you, perhaps, once more to offer me your hand." "I do not doubt it; for notwithstanding the crime of which you are accused, and of which you accuse yourself, everything in you announces courage and frankness. I am sure you are unjustly suspected; appearances, perhaps, compromise you." "Oh! as to that, you are wrong, Germain," said the Chourineur, so seriously this time, and such with an accent of sincerity, that Germain was forced to believe him. "As true as I have a protector" (the Chourineur took off his cap), "who is to me what the God is for the priests, I robbed at night, by breaking into a window; I was caught in the fact, and secured, with the stolen goods in my possession." "But want, hunger, drove you, then, to this extremity?" "Hunger? I had one hundred and twenty francs when they arrested me—the change of a note of a thousand francs, without counting that the protector of whom I have spoken, who does not know that I am here, will never let me want anything. But since I have spoken to you of my protector, you ought to believe that I am speaking the truth, because, you see, it is like going down on your knees. Thus, the torrent of blows that I rained down on the Skeleton is a fashion

of his, which I copied after nature. The idea of the robbery—it is on account of him it came into my head. In fine, if you are here instead of being strangled by the Skeleton, thanks to him."

"But this protector?" "Is also your's." "Mine?" "Yes! Rodolphe protects you; my lord, I ought to say, for he is at least a prince; but I am accustomed to call him Rodolphe, and he allows it." "You mistake," said Germain, more and more surprised; "I do not know the prince." "Yes, but he knows you; you do not doubt it? It is possible—it is his way. If he knows that there is a good man in trouble—the good man is relieved; and he, nor seen nor known. I perplex you; for him happiness falls from the clouds, like a tile on the head. Thus, patience! some day or other you will receive your tile." "Truly, what you say confounds me." "You will have a good deal more of the same! To return to my protector: some time since, after a service which he pretended I had rendered him, he procured me a superb position; I have no need to tell you what—it would be too long; in a word, he sent me to Marseilles. I left Paris, contented as a beggar! good! but soon that changed. A supposition: let us say that I left on a fine sunny day; well! the next day is cloudy; the day after very cloudy, and every succeeding day more and more so, until, at length, it became as black as the devil. Do you comprehend?" "Not exactly." "Well, let us see. Have you had a dog?" "What a singular question." "Have you had a dog that loved you well, and that was lost?" "No."

"Then I will tell you at once, that when at a distance from Rodolphe, I was restless, uneasy, alarmed, like a dog that had lost his master. It was brutish, but the dogs also are brutes, and this does not prevent them from being attached to their masters, and remembering quite as much the good mouthfuls as the kickings they are accustomed to receive; and Rodolphe had given me better than good mouthfuls, for, do you see, for me Rodolphe is all in all. From a wicked, brutal, savage, and riotous rascal, he has made me a kind of honest man, by saying only two words to me: but these words were like magic." "And those words, what are they? What did he say to you?" "He told me that I had still a heart and honour, although I had been to the galleys—not for having robbed, it is true. Oh! that, never, but for what is worse, perhaps—for having killed. Yes," said the Chourineur, in a sad tone, "yes, killed, in a moment of anger, because from my childhood, brought up like a brute, with-

out father or mother, abandoned in the streets of Paris, I knew neither God nor devil, nor good nor evil, nor strong nor weak. Sometimes the blood rushed to my eyes, I saw red, and if I had a knife in my hand, I stabbed. I was like a real wolf; what! I could not frequent any other place than those, where I met beggars and bandits; I did not put a crape on my hat for that. I was obliged to live in the mire; I did not even know I was there. But, when, Rodolphe told me that since, in spite of the contempt of the world and misery, instead of stealing, as others did, I had preferred to work as much as I could, and at what I could, that showed I still had a heart and honour. Thunder! do you see, these two words had the same effect upon me as if some one had caught me by the hair, and raised me a thousand feet in the air above the beggars with whom I had lived, and showed me in what mire I wallowed. Then, of course, I said, 'Thank you, I have enough.' Then my heart beat with something besides anger, and I swore to myself always to keep this honour of which Rodolphe had spoken. You see, Germain, by telling me with kindness that I was not as bad as I thought myself Rodolphe encouraged me, and, thanks to him, I have become better than I was."

On hearing this language, Germain comprehended still less how the Chourineur could have committed the robbery of which he accused himself.

CHAPTER XXV.

DELIVERANCE.

"No" thought Germain "it is impossible; this man, who suffers himself to be thus carried away by the simple words honour and heart, cannot have committed this robbery of which he speaks with so much coolness!" The Chourineur continued without remarking the astonishment of Germain: "Finally, the reason why I am to Rodolphe like a dog to his master is that he has raised me in my own estimation. Before I knew him I was only sensible to the touch; but he, *he* made me feel within, and deep down, I tell you. Once separated from him and the place where he dwelt, I found myself like a body without a soul. As I travelled on, I said to myself, 'He leads such a droll life! he mingles with such great scoundrels (I know something about it) that he will risk his bones twenty times a day,' and it is under these circumstances that I could play the dog for him, and defend my master; for I have

good teeth. But, on the other hand, he had told me, 'You must make yourself useful to others; go, then, where you may be of some good.' I had a great desire to answer him, 'For me, there is no one to serve but you, Rodolphe.' But I did not dare. He told me, 'Go.' I went; and I have obeyed him as well as I was able. But, thunder! when the time came to get into the tub—to leave France, and place the sea between him and me, without the hope of ever seeing him again—in truth, I had not the courage. He told his correspondent to give me a heap of money when I should embark. I went to see the gentleman. I told him, 'It is impossible, just now; I prefer the solid ground. Give me enough to get back to Paris on foot. I have good legs. I cannot embark. Rodolphe shall say what he pleases; he will be angry; he will not see me any more. Possibly I shall see him; I shall be where he is; and if he continues the life he leads, sooner or later, I shall arrive in time, perhaps to put myself between a knife and him. And besides, I cannot go so far away from him.' At length they gave me enough for my journey. I arrived at Paris. I do not fear trifles; but once back, fear seized me. What could I say to Rodolphe to excuse myself for having returned without his permission? Bah! after all, he will not eat me. What shall be, shall be. I go and find his friend, a great, fat, bald man—another trump, this one. Thunder! when Murphy came in, I said, 'My fate will be decided.' I felt my throat dry—my heart beat a tattoo. I expected to be scolded soundly. Well, yes! the worthy man received me as if he had left me the evening previous. He told me that Rodolphe, far from being angry, wished to see me at once. In short, he took me to my protector. Thunder! when I found myself again face to face with him—him who has such an open hand and so good a heart—who is terrible as a lion, and gentle as a child—who is a prince, and who has worn a blouse like me—to have the opportunity (which I bless) of dealing out some fisticuffs at me. Faith, Germain, on thinking of all these fascinations which he possesses, I felt myself done up. I wept like a doe. Well! instead of laughing—for imagine my sconce when I weep—Rodolphe said to me, seriously:—'So you are back again, my good fellow?' 'Yes, Rodolphe; pardon me if I am wrong, but I could not go. Make me a little nest in a corner of your court, give me my food, or let me earn it here; that is all I ask from you; and above all, do not be angry because I have returned.' 'I am so far from that, my good friend, that you have returned just in time

to render me, a service.' 'I, Rodolphe? Can it be possible! Well, do you see, it must be, as you told me, that there is some thing *above*; otherwise, how explain that I arrive here just at the moment when you have need of me? and what is it then, I can do for you, Monsieur Rodolphe—jump from the towers of Nôtre Dame?' 'Less than that, my man. An honest and excellent young man, for whom I am as much interested as if he were my son, is unjustly accused of robbery and confined in La Force; he is called Germain, and is of a mild and gentle disposition; the scoundrels with whom he is imprisoned have taken an aversion to him; he may be in great danger; you, who have unfortunately the experience of a prison life, and know a great number of prisoners could you not, in case some of your old comrades should be at La Force, could you not go and see them, and by promises of money, which shall be faithfully kept, engage them to protect this unhappy young man?'" "But who then, is this generous and unknown man, who takes so much interest in my fate?" said Germain, more and more surprised. "You will know, perhaps; as for me, I am ignorant. To return to my conversation with Rodolphe: while he was talking, an idea struck me, but an idea so farcical, that I could not keep from laughing before him. 'What is the matter?' said he. 'Rodolphe, I laugh because I am content, and I am content because I have the means of placing your Germain out of all danger, by giving him a protector who will defend him bravely; for, once the young man is under the wing of the fellow of whom I speak, there is not one of them will dare to come and look under his nose.' 'Very well, my friend; it is doubtless one of your old companions?' 'Exactly, Rodolphe; he entered La Force some days ago; I learned this on my arrival; we must have some money.' 'How much?' 'A thousand francs.' 'Here they are.' 'Thank you, Rodolphe; in two days you shall hear from me; your servant.' Thunder! the king was not my master; I could render the service to Rodolphe by joining you: that was famous." "I, begin to understand, or rather, I tremble to understand cried Germain; "such fidelity cannot be possible? to come to protect me, defend me in this prison, you have, perhaps, committed a robbery? oh, this would be the sorrow of my whole life." "A moment: Rodolphe told me that I had a heart and honour; these words are my law, do you see; and he can tell me so yet; for if I am no better than formerly, at least I am no worse." "But this robbery? If you have not committed it, how are you here?"

"Stop a moment. Here is the farce: with my thousand francs I went and bought a black rug: I shaved off my whiskers; I put on blue spectacles; I stuck a pillow in my back, and made up a hump. I began at once to look for one or two rooms on a ground floor in a retired street. I found my affair in the Rue du Provence; I paid my rent in advance, under the name of Gregory. The next day I went to the Temple to buy furniture for my two rooms, always wearing my black wig, my hump, and my blue spectacles, so that I might be well known. I sent the things to the Rue du Provence, and six silver spoons and forks which I bought on the Boulevard Saint Denis, still in my disguise as a hunchback. I returned to put all in order in my domicile. I said to the porter that I should not sleep there for two days, and I carried away my key. The windows of the two rooms were fastened by strong shutters. Before I went away, I left one unfastened on the inside. At night I took off my wig, my spectacles, and my hump, with which I had been to make my purchases and hire my rooms. I put this disguise in a trunk which I sent to the address of Murphy, the friend of Rodolphe, begging him to take care of it. I bought this blouse and blue cap, and an iron bar, and at one o'clock in the morning I came to the Rue du Provence to hang about my lodgings, waiting until the patrol should pass to commence my robbery, my burglary in order to be taken up."

And the Chourineur was unable to suppress a hearty fit of laughter. "Ah! I comprehend," cried Germain. "But you will see if I had not ill luck: no patrol passed. I could have robbed myself twenty times at my ease. At length, about two o'clock, I heard the land crabs at the end of the street; I opened my window, and broke two or three panes of glass to make a devil of a noise; I dashed in the window, jumped into the room, and seized the box of silver and some clothes. Happily, the patrol had heard the jingling of the glass just as I got out of the window. I was nabbed by the guard, who, at the noise of breaking glass, had come to see what was the matter. They knocked at the door; the porter opened it; they sent for the commissary; he came; the porter said that the rooms had been fixed the evening previous by a gentleman with a hunchback, with black hair and blue spectacles, and who was named Gregory. I had the flaxen mane which you see; I had my eyes open like a hare in her form; I was straight as a Russian at the command, 'carry arms!' They could not take me then for the hunchback, with blue

spectacles and black locks. I confessed everything; I was arrested; they took me to the depôt—from the depôt here; and I arrived at a good moment, just in time to snatch from the claws of the Skeleton the young man of whom Rodolphe had said, 'I am as much interested for him as for my own son.'" "Ah! what do I not owe you for such services!" cried Germain. "It is not to me; it is to Rodolphe you owe it." "But the cause of his interest for me?" "He will tell you, unless he does not choose to do so; for often he is pleased to do good, and if you take it into your head to ask him why, he will not mind answering, 'Attend to what concerns you.'" "And does Rodolphe know that you are here?" "Not so stupid as to tell him my idea; he would not, perhaps, have allowed me this farce; and, without bragging, hieu! It is famous!" "But the risks you have run, and still run?" "What did I risk? not to be conducted to La Force, where you were, that is true. But I counted on the protection of Rodolphe to have my prison changed and join you; a lord like him can do everything. And when I was once shut up, he would have wished me to be of service to you." "But when your trial comes on?" "Well! I will beg Murphy to send me my trunk; I will put on before my judge the black wig, the blue spectacles, and the hump, and I will become Gregory again; send for the porter who hired me the chamber, and for the shopkeepers who sold me the furniture; so much for the robbed. If they wish to see the robber again, I will throw off my disguise, and it will be as clear as day that the robbed and the robber make the sum total of the Chourineur, neither more nor less. Then, what the devil would you have them do to me, when it shall be proved that I have robbed myself?" "That's true!" said Germain, more assured; "but since you felt so much interest for me, why did you not speak to me on entering the prison?" "I knew at once the plot which was formed against you; I could have exposed it before Pique-Vinaigre had commenced his story; but to denounce even such bandits does not go down with me. I preferred to depend upon my fists to drag you from the paws of the Skeleton. And, besides, when I saw this brigand, I said to myself, 'Here is a fine occasion to practice the hail-storm of fisticuffs, after the manner of Rodolphe, to which I am indebted for the honour of his acquaintance.'" "But if all the prisoners, had taken part against you, what could you have done?" "Then I should have screamed like an eagle, and called for help! But it

suited me to do my own cooking myself: to be able to say to Rodolphe, 'No one but I meddled in the affair. I have defended, and I will defend, your young man, the tranquil!'"

At this moment the keeper entered quickly. "Germain, come, make haste, to the director's room. He wishes to speak to you at once. And you, Chourineur, my boy, descend to the Fosse aux Lions. You shall be captain if it suits you, for you have every requisite to fill the office, and the prisoners will not joke with one of your calibre." "All the same to me; as well be captain as soldier, while one is here." "Will you still refuse my hand?" said Germain, cordially, to the Chourineur. "Faith! no; I believe that now I can allow myself this pleasure, and I do it with all my heart." "We shall see each other again, for I am now under your protection. I shall have nothing more to fear, and from my cell I shall descend each day to the court." "Be assured, if I wish it, they shall not speak to you except on all fours. But, now I think of it, you know how to write; put down on paper what I have just related to you, and send it to Rodolphe; he will know that he need have no more uneasiness about you, and that I am here for a good motive: for if he should learn elsewhere that the Chourineur had stolen, and he did not know the game—thunder! that would not suit me." "Rest satisfied: this very night I will write to my unknown protector; to-morrow you will give me his address, and the letter shall be sent. Adieu once more; thank you, my good fellow." "Adieu, Germain; I go to return among this band of rascals, of whom I am captain; they will have to march pretty straight, or stand from under!" "When I think that on my account you go to live for some time among these wretches—" "What is that to me, now that there is no risk of their contaminating me? Rodolphe has washed me too well. I am insured against fire!" And the Chourineur followed the keeper.

Germain entered the apartment of the director. What was his surprise—he found Rigolette there. Rigolette, pale, in deep emotion, her eyes bathed in tears, and yet smiling through these tears, her face expressed a sentiment of joy, of happiness indescribable. "I have good news to tell you," said the director. "The judges have just declared that no action lies against you, and I have the order to set you immediately at liberty." "What do you say? Can it be possible?" Rigolette wished to speak; her too lively emotion prevented her; she could only make to

Germain an affirmative sign with her head. "Mademoiselle arrived here a few moments after I received the order to set you at liberty," added the director. "A letter of all-powerful recommendation which she brought me, has informed me of the touching devotion she has shown you during your stay in prison. It is, then, with lively pleasure that I have sent for you, certain that you would be very happy to give your arm to mademoiselle on leaving this place." "A dream! surely it is a dream!" said Germain. "Ah! what kindness! Pardon me if surprise—joy—prevents me from thanking you as I ought." "And I, too, Germain, I cannot find a word to say," added Rigolette. "Judge of my happiness: on leaving you, I found the friend of Rodolphe waiting for me." "Rodolphe again!" said the astonished Germain. "Yes; now I can tell you all. Murphy said to me then, 'Germain is free; here is a letter for the director of the prison; before you arrive, he will have received the order to set Germain at liberty, and you can bring him away.' I could not believe what I heard, and yet it was true. Quick—quick—I took a hack—I arrived—and it is now below waiting for us."

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We renounce the attempt to describe the delights of the two lovers when they left La Force; of the evening they passed in the little chamber of Rigolette, which Germain left at eleven o'clock for a modest furnished apartment.

THE MYSTERIES OF PARIS.

PART VIII.

CHAPTER I.

RODOLPHE AND SARAH.

We will conduct the reader to the Countess Sarah's, whom a salutary crisis had snatched from the delirium and sufferings which, during several days, had caused the most serious fears for her life. The day began to close. Sarah, seated in a large arm-chair, and supported by her brother, Thomas Seyton, was attentively surveying herself in a mirror, which was held by one of her women kneeling before her. This scene passed in the saloon where La Chouette had made her murderous attempt. The countess was as pale as marble, which gave a bolder relief to her dark eyes and hair: a large handkerchief of white muslin completely concealed her form.

"Give me the 'band of coral,'" she said to one of her women, in a weak but imperious voice. "Betsy will fasten it," said Thomas Seyton; "you will fatigue yourself; you are already so imprudent." "The band! the band!" repeated Sarah impatiently, as she took the jewel, and placed it on her brow. "Now fasten it, and leave me," she added, to her women. As they were retiring, she said, "Let them show Ferrand into the little blue saloon; and," she continued, with an expression of ill-concealed pride, "as soon as his royal highness the grand-duke of Gerolstein arrives, he must be ushered in here. At length," said Sarah, throwing herself back in her chair as soon as she was alone with her brother, "at length I touch this crown—the dream of my life! The prediction is about to be accomplished!" "Sarah, calm your emotion," said her brother, earnestly. "Yesterday, they still despaired of your life; disappointment now might cause a relapse." "You are right, Tom. The fall would be dreadful, for my hopes have never been nearer being realized than now! I am certain that what has prevented me from sinking under my sufferings has been my constant hope to profit

by the important revelation which this woman made me at the moment when she stabbed me." "Even during your delirium you constantly referred to this idea." "Because this idea alone sustained my flickering life. What a hope! Sovereign princess! almost a queen!" she added, with rapture. "Once more, Sarah, no mad dreams; the awakening will be terrible." "Mad dreams? How! when Rodolphe shall know that this young girl, now a prisoner at Saint Lazare, is our child, do you think that—" Seyton interrupted his sister. "I believe," he replied, with bitterness, "that princes place reasons of state and political proprieties, before natural ties." "Do you count so little on my address?" "The prince is not the same fond and enamoured youth whom you seduced in days gone by." "Do you know why I have wished to ornament my hair with this band of coral? and why I have put on this white robe? It is because the first time Rodolphe saw me at the court of Gerolstein, I was dressed in white, and I wore this same bandeau of coral in my hair." "How?" said Thomas Seyton, looking at his sister with surprise; "you wish to evoke these memories; do you not, on the contrary, dread their influence?" "I know Rodolphe better than you. Doubtless, my features, now changed by age and sufferings, are no longer those of the young girl of sixteen he so wildly loved—whom he has alone loved—for I was his first love. And this love, unique in the life of man, leaves always in his heart ineffaceable traces. Thus, believe me, brother, the sight of this ornament will awaken in Rodolphe not only the memories of his love, but also those of his youth; and to men the recollection of their first emotions is always sweet and precious." "But to these soft memories are joined others of terrible import. Do you forget the fatal termination of your love? The conduct of the prince's father towards you? Your obstinate silence when Rodolphe, after your marriage with the Count M'Gregor, demanded your child, then quite an infant? Your daughter—of whose death, ten years before, you informed him in a cold letter? Do you forget that, since that time, the prince has only felt for you contempt—hatred?" "Pity has taken the place of hatred. Since he has known that I was in a dying state, each day has he sent the Baron de Graün to make inquiries." "From humanity." "Just now he answered my note; said that he would come here. This concession is immense, my brother." "He believes you dying. He supposes that he is coming to

take a last farewell. You were wrong not to write to him what you are now about to disclose." "I know why I act thus. This revelation will fill him with surprise and joy, and I shall be present to profit by his first burst of tenderness. To-day, or never, he shall say to me, 'A marriage would make the birth of our child legitimate.' If he says so, his word is sacred, and the hope of all my life will at length be realized." "If he makes you this promise—yes." * *

At this moment was heard the noise of a carriage which entered the court-yard. "It is he; it is Rodolphe," cried Sarah. "Yes; it is the prince; he is getting out of the carriage." "Leave me alone—this is the decisive moment," said Sarah with immovable self-control; for a towering ambition and unbounded selfishness had always been and still were the ruling motives of this woman. After a momentary hesitation Thomas Seyton drew near to his sister and said. "It is I who will inform the prince how your daughter has been saved; this interview will be too dangerous for you; a violent emotion will kill you." "Your hand, my brother," said Sarah. Then placing on her impassable heart the hand of Thomas Seyton, she added with a forced and icy smile. "Am I agitated?" "No, in truth, not at all," said Seyton, with surprise; "I know what command you have over yourself. But at such a moment—wherefore will you be decided—a crown—or death—your calmness absolutely confounds me."

"Why this astonishment, my brother? did you not know that nothing—no, nothing has ever caused this marble heart to quicken its pulsations? it will only palpitate when I shall feel placing on my brow the sovereign crown.

"I hear Rodolphe—leave me." "But—" "Leave me," cried Sarah, in a tone so imperious, so resolute, that her brother left the apartment some moments before the prince was introduced. When Rodolphe entered the saloon, his countenance expressed pity; but seeing the countess seated in the chair decked with her jewels, he drew back with surprise, and his physiognomy became immediately sombre and suspicious.

The countess, divining his thoughts, said to him in a soft and feeble voice, "You thought to find me dying; you came to receive my last 'adieux?" "I have always regarded as sacred the last wishes of the dying, but it appears that I have been deceived."

"Reassure yourself," said Sarah, interrupting Rodolphe, "reassure yourself. I have not deceived you: there remain for me

but a few hours to live. Pardon me a last act of coquetry; I wish to spare you the usual attendants of a death-bed. I wish to die dressed as I was the first time I saw you. Alas! after ten years of separation, I see you again. Thanks—oh, thanks! But in your turn render praise to God for having moved you to come to listen to my last prayer, if you had refused me, I had carried with me to the tomb a secret which is going to make the joy, the happiness of your life. Joy mixed with some tears, like all other human felicity! but this felicity! you would buy at the price of half the remaining days of your life!"

"What do you mean to say?" demanded the prince with surprise.

"Yes, Rodolphe, if you had not come, this secret would have followed me to the tomb—it had been my sole vengeance; and yet —no, no, I should not have this terrible courage. Although you would have caused me much suffering, I should have divided with you this supreme happiness, which, more fortunate than I, you will a long time enjoy." "But once more, madame, what is all this?"

"When you know it, you will comprehend my delay in informing you, for you will regard this revelation as a miracle from heaven. But, strange thought—I who with one word can cause you the greatest happiness that you have ever experienced—I feel, although now the minutes of my life are counted—I feel an indescribable satisfaction in prolonging your suspense; and besides, I know your heart, and, in spite of the firmness of your character I should fear to annonnce to you, without preparation, a discovery so incredible. The emotions of sudden joy have also their dangers." "Your pallor increases—you with difficulty restrain a violent agitation," said Rodolphe, "all this proves that something grave and important—"

"Grave and important!" repeated Sarah, in a faltering voice, for, notwithstanding her habitual immobility, in reflecting upon the immense importance of the revelation she was about to make to Rodolphe, she felt herself more agitated than she could have thought possible. After a moment's silence, Sarah, no longer able to restrain herself, cried:—"Rodolphe, our child is not dead."

"Our child!" "I tell you, she lives!" These words, the accent of truth with which they were pronounced, moved the prince to the very bottom of his heart. "Our child!" he repeated, advancing towards Sarah; "our child! my daughter!" "She is not

dead; I have certain proofs; I know where she is—to-morrow you shall see her." "My daughter! my child!" repeated Rodolphe, as if in a dream; "can it be possible! she is alive!" Then suddenly reflecting on the great improbability of this relation, and fearing to be the dupe of Sarah, he cried, "No, no; it is a dream! it is impossible! you deceive me; it is a 'ruse,' an unworthy deceit!"

"Rodolphe, listen to me!" "No I know your ambition; I know of what you are capable: I can fathom the object of this fabrication." "Well you speak the truth. I am capable of every thing. Yes, I did wish to deceive you. Yes, some days before I received my mortal wound, I did wish to find a young girl, whom I would have presented to you in the place of our child—whom you regret so bitterly." "Enough—oh! enough, madame." "After this confession you will believe me, perhaps, or, rather, you will be forced to give credence to the proofs." "To the proofs!" "Yes, Rodolphe: I repeat it, I have wished to deceive you, to substitute an obscure girl in the place of her we mourn; but God willed that, in the moment when I was about to carry the project into execution, I should be stricken down." "You! at this moment!" "God has also willed that they should propose to me to play this part—do you know whom? our daughter." "Are you delirious? In the name of Heaven—" "I am not delirious, Rodolphe. In this casket, among some pictures and a portrait, which will prove to you the truth of what I say, you will find a paper stained with my blood." "With your blood!" "The woman who informed me that our child was still living, dictated to me this revelation—then I was stabbed with a poinard."

"And who was she? how did she know?" "It was to her our child was delivered—quite an infant—after having falsely reported her death." "But this woman—her name? can she be believed? where did you become acquainted with her?" "I tell you, Rodolphe, that all this is fate—providential. Some months since, you rescued a poor girl from poverty, to send her to the country—is it not so?" "Yes, to Bouqueval." "Jealousy and hatred drove me wild. I caused the young girl to be carried off by the woman of whom I have spoken." "And she took the unhappy child to Saint Lazare." "Where she is yet." "She is there no longer. Ah! you do not know, madame, the frightful evil you have caused by tearing this poor child from the retreat where I had placed her; but—" "This young girl is no longer at Saint Lazare!" cried Sarah, with alarm; "And you speak of

a frightful evil!" "A monster of cupidity had an interest in her death. They have drowned her, madame; but answer, you say—" "My daughter!" cried Sarah, interrupting Rodolphe, and rising on her feet, immovable as a marble statue. "What does she say? my God!" cried Rodolphe. "My child!" repeated Sarah, whose face became livid and frightful from despair; "they have killed my child!" "The La Goualeuse your child!" repeated Rodolphe, recoiling with horror. "The Goualeuse! yes; that is the name the woman mentioned—this woman called La Chouette. Dead—dead!" cried Sarah, still motionless, her eyes fixed and glaring; "they have killed her." "Sarah;" replied Rodolphe, as pale and alarmed as she; "calm yourself—answer me—La Goualeuse—this young girl whom you have caused to be carried off by La Chouette from Bouqueval, was—" "Our child!" "She;" "And they have killed her;" "Oh no, no—you rave—this cannot be. You know not, no, you know not how frightful this is. Sarah; compose yourself; speak tranquilly. Seat yourself—calm yourself. Often there are appearances—resemblances which deceive; one is inclined to believe what one desires. It is not a reproach I make you; but explain to me well—tell me all the reasons you have to credit this, for it cannot be—no, no! it must not be; it is not so." After a moment's pause, the countess collected her thoughts, and said to Rodolphe in an expiring voice: "Hearing of your marriage, thinking to be married myself, I could not keep our daughter with me; she was then four years old." "But at this epoch I asked you for her with prayers," cried Rodolphe, in a heart-rending tone, "and my letters remained unanswered. The only one you wrote me announced her death." "I wished to avenge myself for your contempt by refusing you your child. That was unworthy; but listen to me; I feel it—my life is drawing to a close; this last blow has overwhelmed me." "No, no; I do not believe you—I do not wish to believe you. La Goualeuse my child! Oh, my God! you would not this should be so." "Listen to me, I say. When she was four years old, my brother commissioned Madame Seraphin, widow of one of his old servants, to bring up the child till she was old enough to be placed at school. The sum destined for her future support, was placed by my brother with a notary renowned for his probity. The letters of this man, and of Madame Seraphin, addressed at this period to me and my brother, are there, in that casket. At the end of a year they

wrote me that the health of my child failed; eight months after, that she was dead; and they sent the official notification of her decease. At this time, Madame Seraphin entered the service of Ferrand, after having delivered our child to La Chouette by the hands of a wretch now in the galleys at Rochefort. I began to write this confession of La Chouette when she wounded me. This paper is there, with a portrait of our daughter at the age of four years. Examine all—letters, confession, portrait—and you, who have seen her—this unfortunate child—judge."

At these words, which exhausted her strength, Sarah fell back almost lifeless in her chair. Rodolphe was thunderstruck at this revelation.

There are some misfortunes so unlooked for, so horrible, that we are unwilling to believe them until compelled by overwhelming evidence. Rodolphe, persuaded of the death of Fleur de Marie, had but one hope left, which was to convince himself that she was not his child. With a frightful calmness, which alarmed Sarah, he approached the table, opened the casket, and fell to reading the letters one by one, and examining, with scrupulous attention, the papers which accompanied them. These letters, stamped at the post-office, written to Sarah and her brother by the notary and by Madame Seraphin, related to the childhood of Fleur de Marie, and to the investment of the funds destined for her support. Rodolphe could not doubt the authenticity of this correspondence. The confession of La Chouette was confirmed by the information obtained (of which we have spoken at the commencement of this history) by order of Rodolphe, and which pointed out a man named Pierre Tournemine, a prisoner at Rochefort, as the man who had received Fleur de Marie from Madame Seraphin to deliver her to La Chouette—to La Chouette, whom the unfortunate child had herself recognised before Rodolphe, at the tapis-franc of the Ogresse. Rodolphe could no longer doubt the identity of these persons, and of the Goualeuse. The official notice concerning her death appeared in conformity to law; but Ferrand had himself acknowledged to Cecily that this forged notice had served for the spoliation of a considerable sum, formerly settled as an annuity on the young girl whom he had caused to be drowned by Nicolas Martial, at the island of the Ravageur. It was, then, with growing and alarming anguish, that Rodolphe acquired, in spite of himself, the terrible conviction that the Goualeuse was his daughter, and that she was dead.

Unfortunately for him, all seemed to confirm this belief. Before condemning Jacques Ferrand on the proofs giving by the notary himself to Cecily, the prince, in his deep interest for the Gousleuse, having caused inquriies to be made at Asnieres, had learned that, in effect, two women, one old, and the other young, and dressed in a peasant's costume, had been drowned in going to the island of the Ravageur, and that rumour accused the Martials of this new crime. Here we must state that, in spite of the attention of Doctor Griffon, of the Comte de Saint Remy, and of La Louve, Fleur de Marie, for a long time in a desperate situation had hardly become convalescent, and that her weakness, mental and physical, was such, that she had not been able, up to this time, to inform Madame Georges or Rodolphe of her position. This concourse of circumstances could not leave the slightest hope to the prince. A last proof was reserved for him. At length he cast his eyes on the miniature, which he had almost feared to look at. The blow was frightful. In this infantine and charming face, already radiant with that divine beauty which belongs to the cherubim, he recognised in a striking manner the features of Fleur de Marie: her Grecian nose, her noble forehead, her little mouth, already slightly serious. For, said Madame Seraphin to Sarah, in one of her letters which Rodolphe had just read, "*The child asks always for its mother, and is very sad.*" There were her large blue eyes, of a blue so pure and soft; as La Chouette had said to Sarah, on recognising in this miniature the features of the unfortunate child whom she had persecuted, in her infancy, under the name of Pegriotte, and as a young girl under the name of La Goualeuse. At the sight of this miniature, the tumultuous and violent feelings of Rodolphe were stifled by his tears. He fell back, heart broken, on a chair, and concealed his face in his hands, sobbing convulsively.

CHAPTER II.

VENGEANCE.

While Rodolphe wept bitterly, the features of Sarah changed perceptibly. At the moment when she thought she was about to realize the dream of her ambitious life, the last hope, which until now had sustained her, was crushed for ever. This dreadful disappointment could not fail to have on her health, momentarily ameliorated, a mortal reaction. Fallen back in her chair,

trembling with a feverish agitation, her hands crossed and clasped on her knees, her eyes fixed, the countess awaited with alarm, the first word of Rodolphe. Knowing the impetuous character of the prince, she feared that the sad grief, which drew so many tears from this inflexible and resolute man, would be succeeded by some terrible transports of passion.

Suddenly Rodolphe raised his head, wiped away his tears, arose, and approached Sarah, his arms crossed on his bosom, his manner menacing and without pity. He looked at her for some moments in silence; then he said, in a hollow voice, "This ought to be. I have drawn the sword against my father; I am stricken in my child. Just punishment of the parricide. Listen to me madame—" "Parricide! you, my God! Oh! fatal day; of what are you going to inform me?" "It is necessary that you should know, in this awful moment, all the evils caused by your implacable ambition, by your unbounded selfishness. Do you understand me, woman without heart, and without conscience? Do you hear me, unnatural mother?" "Oh, have pity; Rodolphe—" "No pardon for you, who, formerly without pity for a sincere love, coldly trifled, in the furtherance of your execrable pride, with a generous and devoted passion, of which you feigned to partake. No mercy for you, who armed the son against the father. No grace for you, who, instead of watching piously over your child, abandoned her to mercenary hands, in order to satisfy your cupidity by a rich marriage, as you had already served your mad ambition by inciting me to marry you. No mercy for you, who, after having refused me my child, have now caused her death by your unholy deceptions. Maledictions on you—you, my evil genius, and that of my family." "Oh! my God! he is without pity; leave me, leave me." "You shall hear me, I tell you. Do you remember the last day I saw you; it is seventeen years since; you could no longer conceal the fruits of our secret union, which, like you, I believed indissoluble. I knew the inflexible character of my father. I knew what political marriage he projected for me. Braving his indignation, I declared to him that you were my wife before God and before man; that in a short time I should become a father. His anger was terrible; he would not give credence to my marriage; so much deception seemed impossible to him. He threatened me with his displeasure if I allowed myself to speak before him of such folly. Then I loved you like a madman, dupe of your seductions. I thought that your rigid heart

of brass had beaten for me. I answered to my father that I would never have any wife but you. At these words, his anger had no bounds: he called you the most outrageous names; swore that our marriage was null; and that, in order to punish your presumption, he would place you in the pillory. Yielding to my father, my sovereign, to speak thus of my wife. I dared to threaten him. Exasperated at this insult, my father struck me; mad passion, to the violence of my temper, I dared to forbid my rage blinded me. I drew my sword. I threw myself upon him. Except for Murphy, who turned aside the blow, I had been a parricide in reality, as I was in intention! Do you hear? parricide! And to defend you—you!" "Alas! I was ignorant of all this!" "In vain I have thought my crime expiated; the blow I received to-day is my punishment." "But have I not suffered from the obduracy of your father, who broke our marriage? Why accuse me of not having loved you? when—" "Why?" cried Rodolphe, interrupting Sarah, and casting upon her a glance of withering scorn. "Know it then, and be no more surprised at the horror with which you inspire me. After this fatal scene, in which I had threatened the life of my father, I gave up my sword. I was imprisoned with the greatest secrecy. Polidori, through whom our marriage had been concluded, was arrested. He proved that this union was null; that the clergyman was only a mock one; and that you, your brother and myself had all been deceived. To disarm my father's anger against him, Polidori did more; he gave him one of your letters to your brother, which he had intercepted."

"Heavens! can it be possible?" "Is my contempt for you explained now?" "Oh! enough! enough!" "In this letter you unfolded your ambitious projects with revolting coolness. You treated me with an icy disdain; you sacrificed me to your infernal pride; I was only the instrument by whose means you were to obtain the fulfilment of your destiny. You found that my father lived a very long time." "Unfortunate that I am! Now I understand all." "And to defend you, I had threatened the life of my father. When, on the morrow, without addressing to me a word of reproach, he showed me this letter—this letter, which in every line revealed the blackness of your heart; I could only fall on my knees and ask for pardon. Since that day I have been pursued by unceasing remorse. Soon I left Germany on a long journey; then commenced the penance which I imposed upon

myself. It will only finish with my life. To recompense the good, punish the bad, solace those who suffer, probe all the wounds of humanity, endeavour to snatch souls from perdition—such is the noble task that I have imposed upon myself." "It is noble and holy; it is worthy of you." "If I speak of this vow" eplied Rodolphe, with as much disdain as bitterness; "If this vow, which I have fulfilled, according to my power, wherever I have been, it is not to be praised by you. Listen to me, then. Not long since, I arrived in France; my sojourn in this country was not to be lost to the expiation. In wishing to assist honest unfortunates, I also wished to know those classes whom poverty crushes, hardens, and depraves, knowing that timely succour and kind words have often saved many a poor wretch from the abyss of despair. In order to be my own judge, I assumed the disguise and language of the people whom I wished to observe. It was on one of these excursions, that, for the time, I—I met—" Then, as if he recoiled from this terrible revelation, Rodolphe added, "No, no, I have not the courage." "What have you still to inform me?" "You will only know it too soon; but," said he, with irony, "you feel so lively an interest in the past that I ought to speak to you of events which preceded my return to France. After a long journey, I returned to Germany; I married a Prussian princess. During my absence, you had been driven away from the grand-duchy. Learning that you were married to to the Count M'Gregor, I wrote you to entreat you to send me my child; you did not reply. In spite of all my efforts, I could never find where you had sent this unfortunate child. Ten years ago only, a letter from you informed me that our child was dead. Alas! would to God that she had then been dead; I should not have known the incurable grief which henceforth will imbitter my life." "Now," said Sarah, in a feeble voice, "I am no more astonished at the aversion with which I have inspired you since you have read this letter. I feel it, I shall not survive this last blow. Eh well! yes; pride and ambition have ruined me! Under the appearance of passion, I concealed a frozen heart. Not knowing what good reason you had to despise and hate me, my foolish hopes were renewed. Since we were both free again, I again believed in this prediction which promised me a crown; and when chance discovered my daughter, I seemed to see in this unhoped-for fortune a providential design! Yes; I went so far as to think that your aversion for me would yield to your love for

your child; and that you would give me your hand, in order to restore her to the rank which was her due." "Well! let your execrable ambition be then satisfied and punished! Yes notwithstanding the horror you inspire me with; yes, from attachment—what do I say? from respect for the frightful misfortunes of my child, I should have, although decided to live afterward separated from you—I should have by a marriage which would legitimate my child, rendered her position as dazzling, as lofty as it had been miserable!" "I was not deceived, then! Malheur! malheur! it is too late!" "Oh! I know it; it is not for the death of your child you weep; it is the loss of that rank which you have pursued with untiring pertinacity! Well! may these infamous regrets be your last punishment!" "The last; for I shall not survive." "But, before you die, you shall know what has been the existence of your child since you abandoned her." "Poor child! very miserable, perhaps!" "Do you recollect," said Rodolphe, with terrible calmness, "do you recollect that night when you and your brother followed me to the cité?" "I do recollect; but why this question? your look freezes me." "On coming from this den, you saw, did you not, at the corner of the wretched streets, some unhappy creatures, who—but no, no; I dare not," said Rodolphe, concealing his face in his hands, "I dare not; my words alarm me." "Me also; they alarm me; what is it now, my God?" "You have seen them?" resumed Rodolphe, with an effort. "You have seen them, these women, the shame of their sex? Well, among them did you remark a young girl of sixteen? beautiful, oh; beautiful as an angel: a poor child, who, in the midst of the degradation in which she had been plunged, preserved an expression so pure, so virginal, that the robbers and assassins among whom she lived, madame, had given her the name of Fleur de Marie; did you remark this young girl? speak, speak, tender mother!" "No, I did notice her," said Sarah, almost mechanically. "Really?" cried Rodolphe, with a burst of sardonic laughter. "It is strange. I remarked her on this occasion; listen; well, during one of the excursions of which I have spoken just now, and which then had a double object, I found myself in the cité; not far from the den whither you followed me, a man wished to beat one of those unfortunate creatures; I defended her against brutality. You cannot guess, who was this creature; speak, good and provident mother, speak. You do not guess?" "No, I do not guess. Oh; leave me."

"This unfortunate was Fleur de Marie;" "Oh; my God;" "And you do not guess who was Fleur de Marie, irreproachable mother?" "Kill me; oh; kill me;" "She was La Goualeuse; she was your daughter," cried Rodolphe, with a heart-rending emotion. "Yes, this unfortunate, whom I had rescued from the violence of a liberated galley-slave, was my own child—mine—Rodolphe of Gerolstein's! Oh! there was something in this rencounter with my child, whom I saved without knowing her, something terrible, providential; a recompense for the man who seeks to succour his fellow-men, a punishment for the parricide." "I die cursed and condemned" murmured Sarah, falling back in her chair, and concealing her face in her hands. "Then," continued Rodolphe, with difficulty restraining his feelings, and wishing, in vain, to suppress his sobs, which almost choked him, "when I had rescued her from the hands of her assailant, struck with the inexpressible sweetness of her voice, the angelic expression of her features, it had been impossible not to have become interested in her. With what profound emotion have I listened to the artless and touching recital of her life of abandonment, of sorrow, and of misery; for, do you see, there have been frightful passages in the life of your daughter, madame. Oh! you must know the tortures that your child suffered; yes, Madame la Comtesse, while in the midst of your opulence you were dreaming of a crown, your child, your little child, covered with rags, went at night to beg in the streets, suffering with cold and hunger. During the nights of winter she shivered on a little straw in the corner of a garret, and then, when the horrible woman who abused her was tired of beating the poor little thing, only thinking how she could torture her, do you know what she did, madame? She drew out some of her teeth!" "Oh! would that I could die! it is better agony." "Listen again. Escaping at length from the hands of La Chouette, wandering without bread, without shelter, hardly eight years of age, she was arrested as a vagabond, and put in prison. Ah! these were the best days of your daughter, madame. Yes, in her prison-house, each night she thanked God that she suffered no more from cold and hunger, and was beaten no more. And it is in a prison that she has passed the most precious years of a young girl's life, those years which a tender mother always surrounds with so jealous and pious a solicitude: yes, instead of being protected with maternal care, your daughter has only known the brutal indifference of

jailers; and then, one day, society in its cruel carelessness cast her innocent and pure, beautiful and ingenuous, into the filth and mire of this great city. Unhappy child, abandoned, without support, without advice, delivered to all the chances of misery and vice! Oh!" cried Rodolphe, giving free vent to the sobs which overpowered him; "your heart is hardened, your selfishness cruel, but you would have wept—yes, *you* would have wept, on hearing the touching story of your child. Poor girl! sullied, but not corrupted, still chaste in the midst of this horrible degradation, which was for her a frightful dream; for each word told her horror for the life to which she was so fatally enchained. Oh! if you knew how at each moment were revealed the most adorable instincts; how much goodness; how much touching charity! yes, for it was to relieve an unfortunate more wretched than herself, the poor little thing had spent the little money she had, and which then separated her from the abyss of infamy into which she was plunged. Yes; for the day came—a frightful day—when, without work, without bread, without shelter; horrible women met her, exhausted from weakness—from hunger—and—" Rodolphe could not finish, but cried in a heart-rending voice, "And this was my daughter! my child!" "Imprecations on my head!" murmured Sarah, concealing her face in her hands, as if she had feared the light of day. "Yes," cried Rodolphe, "imprecations on you! for it is your abandonment of this child which has caused all these horrors. Maledictions on you! for when, rescuing her from this filth, I had placed her in a peaceful retreat, you had her torn away by your miserable accomplices. Maledictions on you! for this again placed her in the power of Jacques Ferrand." At this name Rodolphe stopped suddenly. He shuddered as if he had pronounced it for the first time. It was because he now pronounced this name for the first time since he had known that his daughter was the victim of this monster.

The features of the prince assumed then a frightful expression of rage and hatred. Silent, immovable, he remained, as it were, crushed by this thought—that the murderer of his child still lived. Sarah, notwithstanding her increasing weakness, was struck by his sinister look; she feared for herself. "Alas! what is the matter with you?" she murmured, in a trembling voice. "Is it not enough of suffering? My God!" "No; it is not enough! it is not enough!" said Rodolphe, responding to his own thoughts. I have never before experienced this never! this desire for blood

—this calm and reflecting rage! When I did not know that one of the victims of this monster was my own child, I said to myself, the death of this man will be steril, while his life will be fertile, if, to redeem it, he accept the conditions which I impose. To condemn him to be charitable, to expiate his crimes, appear to be just; and then, life without gold, life without sensuality, would be for him a long and double torture. But it is my child whom he has delivered to all the horrors of infamy and misery! but it is my daughter whom he has murdered! I will kill this man!" And the prince sprang towards the door. "Where are you going? Do not abandon me!" cried Sarah, half rising, and extending towards Rodolphe her supplicating hands. "Do not leave me alone! I am going to die!" "Alone! no! no! I leave you with the spectre of your daughter, whose death you have caused!" Sarah, frantic, threw herself on her knees, uttering a cry of affright, as if an alarming phanton had appeared to her. "Pity! I die!" "Die, then, accursed!" answered Rodolphe, frightful with rage. "Now I must have the life of your accomplice, for it is you who have delivered your daughter to her executioner!" * * And Rodolphe ordered himself to be rapidly driven to the house of Ferrand.

CHAPTER III.

LOVE AND MADNESS.

The night closed in while Rodolphe was on his way to the notary's.

The pavilion occupied by Ferrand was buried in profound obscurity. The wind howled. The rain fell. The wind howled, the rain fell also during that gloomy night, when Cecily fled for ever from the house of the notary. Extended on a bed, in his sleeping apartment, feebly lighted by a lamp, Ferrand was dressed in black pantaloons and vest; one of the sleeves of his shirt was turned back, and a ligature round his attenuated arm, announced that he had just been bled. Polidori was standing near the bed, with one hand on the bolster, and appeared to regard the features of his accomplice with inquietude. Nothing could be more hideously frightful than the face of Ferrand, who was then plunged in that torpor which ordinarily succeeds to violent attacks. Of a mortal pallor, strongly relieved by the shadows of the alcove, his face streaming with a cold sweat, announced the last stage of consumption; his closed eyelids were so swollen and injected with blood, that they appeared like two

reddish lobes in the middle of this visage of cadaverous lividity.

"One more attack like the last, and he is dead," said Polidori in a low tone, and, retiring from the bed, he commenced walking slowly up and down the room. "Just now," he resumed, "during the attack which proved nearly fatal, I thought myself in a dream, as I heard him describe all the monstrous hallucinations which crossed his brain. * * * * * *

His sense of hearing was of a sensibility so incredibly painful that, although I spoke to him as low as possible, yet it seemed to him, he said, that his head was a bell, and that an enormous clapper of brass, set in motion by the least sound struck against it from time to time with a deafening and horrid noise."

Polidori again drew near the bed, and remained in a contemplative attitude. The tempest raged without; it soon burst forth in violent gusts of wind and rain, which shook all the windows of the dilapidated mansion. Notwithstanding his audacious wickedness, Polidori was superstitious; dark presentiments agitated him; he felt an indefinable uneasiness; the howlings of the storm, which alone disturbed the mournful silence of the night inspired him with an alarm against which he struggled in vain. To drive away these gloomy thoughts, he again examined the features of his accomplice. "Now," said he leaning over him, "his eye-lids fill with blood. * * What sufferings! how protracted! and under what varied forms! Oh!" added he with a bitter smile, "when nature becomes cruel, and plays the part of a tormentor, she defies the most ferocious combinations of men. *

"Ah! this frightful face! These frequent convulsions which overspread it contract it, and at times render it fearful." Without, the tempest redoubled its fury. "What a storm!" said Polidori throwing himself into the chair, and leaning his face on his hands, "What a night! what a night! Nothing could be more fatal for the situation of Jacques." * * After a long silence Polidori resumed:—

"When I think of the past, when I think of the ambitious projects which, in concert with Sarah, I founded on the youth and inexperience of the prince—how many events! by what degrees have I fallen into the state of criminal degradation in which I live! I, who had thought to effeminate this prince, and make him the docile instrument of the advancement of which I had dreamed! From preceptor I expected to become minister. And notwithstanding my learning, my mind, from misdeed to misdeed I have attained the last degree of infamy. Behold me, in fine

the jailer of my accomplice. * * * * "Oh, yes! the prince is without pity. Better a thousand times, for Jacques Ferrand to have placed his head on the block; better a thousand times the wheel, fire, the molten lead which burns and sinks into the flesh, than the torments this wretch endures. As I see him suffer, I begin to be alarmed for my own fate. What will they do with me—what is reserved for me, the accomplice of Ferrand? To be his jailer will not suffice for the vengeance of the prince. He has not saved me from the scaffold to let me live. Perhaps an eternal prison awaits me in Germany. Better that than death. I can only place myself blindly at the discretion of the prince; it is my sole chance for safety."

At this moment the storm was at its height; a chimney, blown down by the violence of the wind, fell on the roof and into the court with a noise like thunder. Jacques Ferrand, suddenly aroused from his state of torpor, moved on the bed. A hollow groan attracted the attention of Polidori. "He is awakening from his stupor," said he, approaching him slowly. "Polidori," murmured Jacques Ferrand, still stretched on the bed, and with his eyes closed; "Polidori, what is this noise? "A chimney has fallen down," answered Polidori, in a low tone; a frightful hurricane shakes the house to its foundations. The night is horrible, horrible!" The notary did not hear, and half turning his head, whispered—"Polidori, are you there?" "Yes, yes, I am here," said Polidori in a louder voice; "but I answered softly fearing to affect your hearing, as I did a few moments ago." "No, now your voice reaches my ear without causing me those painful sufferings; for it seemed to me at the least noise, as if a thunderbolt had broken in my head. And yet in the midst of all this noise, of these sufferings without name, I distinguished the voice of Cecily calling me." "Always this infernal woman—always. But drive away these thoughts; they will kill you." "Drive them away," cried Jacques Ferrand; "oh! never, never!" "What mad fury! it alarms me." "Hold, now," said the notary, in a husky voice, with his eyes fixed on the obscure corner of the alcove. "I see already—like a form—a shape appearing—there—there." And he pointed with his bony finger in the direction of the vision. "Hush, be quiet, unhappy man." "Ah! there." "Jacques, it is death." "Oh! I see her," added Ferrand, his teeth set. "There she is! how handsome she is! how handsome! See her long black hair; it floats in disorder upon her shoulders!

And her small teeth, which are seen through her half-opened lips; her lips so red and humid! What pearls! Oh! her large eyes seem in turn to sparkle and die. Cecily! Cecily! I adore you!" "Jacques," cried Polidori, alarmed, "do not excite yourself by these phantoms." "It is not a phantom." "Take care; a short time ago, you know, you imagined also that you heard the songs of this woman, and your hearing was suddenly affected by fearful sufferings—take care!" "Leave me," cried the notary, with impatience, "leave me! Of what use is the hearing, except to listen to her? The sight except to see her?" "But the tortures which ensue miserable fool!" The notary did not finish. "He uttered a sharp cry of pain, throwing himself backward on the bed. "What is the matter?" asked Polidori, with astonishment. "Put out that light; its glare is too vivid. I cannot support it; it blinds me!" "How?" said Polidori, more and more surprised. "There is but one lamp with a shade, and its light is very feeble." "I tell you that the light increases here. Hold! more, more! Oh, it is too much! it becomes intolerable!" added Jacques Ferrand, shutting his eyes with an expression of increasing pain. "You are mad! This chamber is hardly lighted, I tell you. I have just turned down the lamps: open your eyes and you will see." "Open my eyes! But I shall be blinded by the torrents of dazzling light which flood this apartment. Here, there, everywhere, spouts of fire—thousands of shining atoms," cried the notary, raising himself: then, uttering a cry of agony, he placed his hands on his eyes. "But I am blinded! this burning light pierces my eyelids! it consumes me. Put out that light! it casts a flame infernal." "No more doubt," said Polidori; "his sight is stricken in the same manner as his hearing was just now. He is lost! To bleed him anew in this state would be fatal. He is lost!" A new, sharp, terrible cry from Ferrand resounded throughout the chamber. "Executioner! put out the lamp; Its burning splendour penetrates through my hands; they are transparent! I see the blood! it circulates in my veins! I did well to close my eyelids! this fiery lava would have entered! Oh, what torture! It is as if my eyes were pierced with red hot needles! Help, my God! help!" cried he, struggling in his bed, a prey to horrid convulsions. Polidori, alarmed at the violence of this attack, extinguished the light. And both were left in utter darkness. At this moment was heard the noise of a carriage which stopped at the door in the street.

Ferrand disgorging his fraudulent gains.

CHAPTER IV.

THE VISIONS.

When the chamber of Jacques Ferrand became darkened, his agony ceased by degrees, and he said to Polidori, "Why did you wait so long before you put out this lamp? Was it to make me endure all the torments of the damned? Oh, what I have suffered! My God! how I have suffered!" "Now do you suffer less?" "I still experience a violent irritation, but it is nothing to what I felt just now." * * * * *

"I hold to life, because the memory of Cecily is all my life." "But this memory kills, exhausts, consumes you." * *

The notary did not hear his accomplice, who foresaw a new hallucination. In effect, Ferrand resumed, with a burst of convulsive and sardonic laughter, "To take Cecily from me! But they do not know that, by concentrating all the power of one's faculties on a single object, the impracticable is gained. Thus directly I am going to the chamber of Cecily, where I have not dared to go since her departure. Oh, to see, to touch the vestments which have belonged to her; the glass before which she dressed—it will be to see herself! Yes; in fixing my eyes on this glass, soon shall I see Cecily appear. It will not be an illusion—a mist; it will be she; I shall find her there, as the sculptor finds the statue in the block of marble." "Where are you going to?" said Polidori, hearing Jacques Ferrand getting up from his bed, for the most profound obscurity still reigned in the apartment. "I go to find Cecily." "You shall not go. The sight of her chamber will kill you." "Cecily awaits me there." "You shall not go; I hold you," said Polidori, seizing the notary by the arm. Jacques Ferrand, arrived at the last stage of weakness, could not struggle against Polidori, who held him with a vigorous hand. "You wish to prevent me going to find Cecily?" "Yes; and, besides, there is a lamp lighted in the next room; you know what effect the light produced just now on your sight?" "Cecily is there; she awaits me. I would traverse a blazing furnace to join her. Let me go. She told me I was her old tiger. Take care, my claws are sharp." "You shall not go. I will rather tie you on your bed as a madman." "Polidori, listen. I am not mad; I have all my reason. I know very well that Cecily is not materially there; but, for me, the phantoms of my imagination are worth more than realities.'

"Silence!" cried Polidori, suddenly listening; "just now I thought I heard a carriage stop at the door. I was not mistaken. I hear now the sound of voices in the court." "You wish to distract my thoughts. The trick is too plain." "I hear some one speak, I tell you, and I think I recognise—" "You wish to deceive me," said Ferrand, interrupting Polidori; "I am not your dupe." "But, wretch, listen then; listen. Ah! do you not hear?" "Let me go; Cecily is there; she calls me. Do not make me angry in my turn, I tell you. Take care. Do you understand? Take care." "You shall not go out." "Take care—" "You shall not go out from here; it is my interest that you should remain." "You prevent me going to find Cecily; my interest wills that you should die. Hold, then!" said the notary, in a hollow voice. Polidori uttered a cry. "Scoundrel! you have struck me in the arm; but the wound is slight; you shall not escape me." "Your wound is mortal. It is the poisoned dagger of Cecily which has stabbed you; I always carried it about me; await the effects of the poison. Ah! you loosen your grasp; you are going to die. You should not have hindered me from going to find Cecily," added Jacques Ferrand, feeling in the dark for the door. "Oh!" murmured Polidori, "my arm stiffens; a mortal coldness seizes me; my knees tremble under me; my blood thickens in my veins; my head turns. Help!" cried the accomplice of Jacques Ferrand, collecting all his strength for a last cry; "Help! I die!" And he sank under his own weight upon the floor. The crash of a glass door, opened with so much violence that several panes were broken to pieces, the resounding voice of Rodolphe, and a noise of hasty footsteps, seemed to respond to Polidori's cry of anguish. Jacques Ferrand, having at length found the lock in the dark, opened the door leading into an adjoining apartment, and rushed into it, his dangerous weapon in his hand. At the same moment, threatening and formidable as the genius of vengeance, the prince entered this room from the opposite side. "Monster!" cried Rodolphe, advancing towards Jacques Ferrand, "it is my daughter whom you have killed! You are going—" The prince did not finish; he recoiled alarmed. One would have said that his words had pierced Jacques Ferrand. Throwing his poignard aside, and placing both his hands before his eyes, the wretch fell with his face to the floor, uttering a cry that was anything but human. In consequence of the phenomenon of

which we have spoken, and of which a profound darkness had suspended the action, when Jacques Ferrand entered this chamber, brilliantly lighted, he was struck with a vertigo (similar to that which we have already described) more intolerable than if he had been exposed to a torrent of light as incandescent as that of the disc of the sun. The agony of this man was a fearful spectacle; he writhed in frightful convulsions, tearing the floor with his nails, as if he wished to dig a hole to escape from the horrible tortures caused by this glaring light. Rodolphe, one of his servants, and the porter of the house who had been compelled to conduct the prince to this apartment, were transfixed with horror. Notwithstanding his just horror, Rodolphe felt an emotion of pity for the unheard-of sufferings of Jacques Ferrand, he ordered him to be laid on a sofa. This was not done without difficulty; for fearing to be submitted again to the direct action of the light, the notary struggled violently, but when it streamed in his face he uttered another cry—a cry which filled Rodolphe with terror. After protracted torments, these attacks ceased, exhausted by their own violence. * * *

Arrived at the mortal period of his delirium, he remembered still the words of Cecily, who had called him her tiger; by degrees his mind again wandered; he imagined himself one in reality. * * * * * *

Crouched in one of the corners of the room, as in his den, he thought himself a tiger; his hoarse, furious cries, the grinding of his teeth, the spasmodic contortions of the muscles of his forehead and face, his glaring look, gave him a vague and frightful resemblance to this ferocious beast.

"Tiger! tiger! tiger I am!" said he, in a broken voice, gathering himself up in a heap, "yes; tiger. How much blood! In my cave, corpses torn to pieces! La Goualeuse, —the brother of this widow—the child of Louise—here are corpses; my tigress, Cecily, shall take her share." Then, looking at his bony fingers, of which the nails had grown very long during his illness, he added these words, "Oh, my sharp nails; an old tiger I am, but more active, and strong, and bold. No one shall dare to dispute my tigress, Cecily. Ah, she calls; she calls," said he, looking around, and seeming to listen. After a moment's pause he groped his way along the wall, saying, "No; I thought I heard her; she is not there, but I see her; oh, always; always.

Oh, there she is. She calls me. She roars. She roars there. I come; I come." And Jacques Ferrand dragged himself towards the middle of the chamber on his hands and knees. Although his strength was exhausted, from time to time he advanced by a convulsive spring; then he would pause, seeming to listen attentively. "Where is she? where is she? I approach, she flies. Ah, there; oh, she awaits me; go, go, Cecily; your old tiger is yours," cried he. And with a desperate effort he succeeded in getting on his knees. But suddenly falling backward with alarm, his body crouched on its heels, his hair standing on end, his look wild, his mouth distorted with terror, his hands stretched out, he seemed to struggle with rage against an invisible object, and cried in a broken voice, "What a bite; help; my arms break; I cannot take it off; sharp teeth. No, no; oh; not the eyes; help; a black serpent; oh, its flat head, its burning eye-balls. It looks at me; it is the devil. Ah, he knows me, Jacques Ferrand—at the church; holy man; always at the church; get out—the sign of the cross—get out." And the notary, raising himself a little, and sustaining himself with one hand on the floor, tried with the other to make the sign of the cross. His livid face was covered with sweat, and all the symptoms of approaching death were manifested. * * *

He fell immediately backward, stiff and inanimate; his eyes seemed to start from their sockets; horrible convulsions stamped his features with unearthly contortions, like those forced from dead bodies by a galvanic battery; a bloody foam inundated his lips, and the life of this monster became extinct in the midst of one of his horrid visions, for he muttered these words, "Night—dark, dark spectres—brazen skeletons—red hot—twine around me their burning fingers—my flesh smokes —spectre—bloody—no, no Cecily—fire—Cecily!"

Such were the last words of Jacques Ferrand.

CHAPTER V.

THE VISIT.

A confused movement announced the arrival of Dr. Griffon, who soon entered the hall of the hospital, accompanied by his friend the Count de Saint Remy, who having, as is known, a lively inte-

rest in Madame de Fermont and her daughter, was far from expecting to find this unfortunate young girl in such a place. As he came into the ward, the cold and stern features of Dr. Griffon seemed to light up with a glow of complacency and authority; he answered with a patronising bend of the head the eager greetings of the sisters. The rough and austere physiognomy of the Count de Saint Remy was stamped with deep sadness. The vanity of his attempts to discover the traces of Madame de Fermont, the ignominious conduct of the viscount, who had preferred an infamous life to death, crushed him to the ground with sorrow. "Eh well!" said Doctor Griffon to the count, with a triumphant air, "what do you think of my hospital?" "In truth," answered Saint Remy, "I do not know why I have yielded to your desire: nothing is more heart-rending than the aspect of these wards filled with sick. Since my entrance here my feelings quite overcome me." "Bah! bah! in fifteen minutes you will think no more about it; you, who are a philosopher, will find ample matter for observation; and then it would have been a shame that you, one of my oldest friends, should not visit the theatre of my labours: of my glory; that you should not see me at my work. All my pride is in my profession; is it wrong?" "No, certainly not; and after your excellent care of Fleur de Marie, whom you have saved, I could refuse you nothing. Poor child! what touching charms her features have preserved, notwithstanding her dangerous illness!" "She has furnished me with a very curious medical fact; I am enchanted with her; By-the-by, how has she passed this night? Did you see her this morning before you left Asnieres?" "No; but La Louve, who nurses her with unceasing assiduity, told me that she had slept perfectly well. Can we allow her to write to-day?" After a moment's hesitation, the doctor answered, "Yes. As long as the patient was not completely convalescent, I feared the slightest emotion for her, the slightest application of mind; but now I do not see that any inconvenience can arise from her writing." "At least, she could inform her friends." "Doubtless. Ah! have you heard nothing more concerning the fate of Madame de Fermont and her daughter?" "Nothing," said Count Saint Remy, sighing. "My constant researches have no success. I have no more hope but in Madame d'Harville, who, as I am told, also takes a lively interest in these two unfortunates; perhaps she may have some information which might lead to the discovery. Three days ago I went to her residence; she was expected to arrive every moment. I

have written to her on this subject, begging her to answer me as soon as possible."

During the conversation of Saint Remy and Doctor Griffon, several persons had slowly assembled around a large table occupying the middle of the hall; on this table was a register, where the students attached to the hospital, who might be recognised by their long white aprons, came in turn to sign their names as being present; a large number of young students arrived successively to swell the scientific cortége of Doctor Griffon, who, arriving a few minutes before his usual hour, waited until the clock struck.

"You see, my dear Saint Remy, that my staff is quite considerable," said Doctor Griffon, with pride, pointing to the crowd who came to attend to his practical instructions. "And these young men follow you to the bed of each patient?" "They only come for that purpose." "But all these beds are occupied by women." "Well?" "The presence of so many men must cause them much painful confusion?" "Go along, a patient has no sex." "In your eyes, perhaps; but in their own—modesty, shame." "All these fine things must be left at the door, my dear Alceste: here we commence on the living experiments and studies which we finish in the dissecting room on the corpse." "Hold, doctor: you are the best and most honest of men: I owe you my life; I recognise your excellent qualities; but habit and the love of your profession make you view certain questions in a manner that is revolting to me. I leave you," said Saint Remy, turning to leave the hall. "What childishness!" cried the doctor, detaining him. "No, no—there are some things which wound me and make me indignant: I foresee that it will be torture for me to accompany you. I will not go, but I will await you here, near this table." "What a man you are with your scruples! But I will not let you off. I admit it may be unpleasant for you to go from bed to bed; remain, then, here; I will call you for two or three cases which are very curious." "Very well; since you are so very urgent, that will be enough, and more than enough." The clock struck half past seven. "Come, gentlemen," said Doctor Griffon, and he commenced his visits, followed by a numerous train. On arriving at the first bed of the range on the right, of which the curtains were closed, the attendant sister said to the doctor, "Monsieur, number one died this morning, at half past four."

"So late? that surprises me; yesterday morning I would not have given her the day: has the body been claimed?" "No doc-

tor." "So much the better—we can proceed with the autopsy; I can make some one happy;" then addressing one of the students the doctor added, "My dear Dunoyer, you have wished for a subject for a long time; you are the first on the list; this one is yours." "Ah! monsieur, how kind you are!" "I could wish oftener to recompense your zeal, my dear friend; but mark the subject, and take possession." And the doctor passed on. The student, with the aid of a scalpel, cut very delicately on the arm of the actress an F and a D, in order to take possession, as the doctor said. "La Lorraine," whispered Jeanne Duport to her neighbour, "who are all these people that follow the doctor?" "They are pupils and students." "Oh, my God! will all these young men be there when he examines me?" "Alas! yes." "But it is on my chest I am injured. Will they examine me before all these men?" "Yes, yes, it must be so—they wish it. I wept enough the first time—I was dying with shame; I resisted; they threatened to turn me away: I was obliged to submit, but it affected me so much that I was worse. Judge, then, almost naked before so many people—it is very painful, truly." "Before the physician alone—I comprehend that—if it is necessary—and even that costs much. But why before all these young men?" "They are learning; they teach them with us. What would we have? we are here for that purpose; it is on this condition that we are received here." "Ah! I comprehend," said Jeanne Duport, with bitterness: they do not give us something for nothing. But yet, there are occasions where this could not be. Thus, if my poor daughter Catherine, who is but fifteen, should come to a hospital, would they dare before all these young men? Oh! no, I think I would prefer to see her die at home." "If she came here, she would have to obey the rules, like you, and me." "Hush, La Lorraine; if this poor demoiselle who is opposite should hear us—she who was rich, who perhaps has never before left her mother—it is going to be her turn—judge how confused and unhappy she will be." "It is true, my God! it is true; I shudder when I think of it poor child." "Silence Jeanne here is the doctor!" said La Lorraine.

CHAPTER VI.

MADEMOISELLE DE FERMONT.

After having rapidly visited several patients whose cases presented no great interest, the doctor at length reached the bed of Jeanne Duport.

At the sight of this eager crowd, who, anxious to see and to know, to understand and to learn, pressed around her bed, the unhappy woman, seized with a tremour of fear and shame, wrapped herself closely in the covering. The severe and intelligent face of Dr. Griffon, his penetrating look, his brow habitually contracted, his rough manner of speaking, augmented still more the alarm of Jeanne. "A new subject!" said the doctor, casting his eye on the card where was inscribed the nature of the malady of the newcomer. He preserved a profound silence, while his assistants imitating the prince of the science, fixed their eyes on the patient with curiosity. She, to throw aside as much as possible all the painful emotions caused by so many spectators, looked steadily at the doctor, with deep anguish. After an examination of several minutes, the doctor, remarking something anomalous in the yellowish tint of the globe of the eye, approaching nearer to her, and with the end of his finger pushing back the eyelid, he examined the crystalline lens. Then several students, answering to a kind of mute invitation of their professor, went, in turn to observe the appearance of the eye.

Afterward the doctor proceeded to this interrogatory:

"Your name?" "Jeanne Duport," murmured the patient, more and more alarmed. "Your age?" "Thirty-six and a half." "Louder. The place of your birth?" "Paris." "Your occupation?" "Fringemaker." "Are you married?" "Alas yes," answered Jeanne, with a deep sigh. "How long since?" "Eighteen years." "Have you any children?" Here, instead of answering, the unhappy mother gave vent to her tears, for a long time restrained. "We do not want tears, but an answer. Have you any children?" "Yes, two little boys and a girl." "How long have you been sick?" "For four days," said Jeanne, wiping her eyes. "Tell me how you became sick?" "It is that—but there are so many people, I do not dare." "Ah! where do you come from, my dear?" said the doctor impatiently. "Would you not like me to bring a confessional here? Come speak, and be quick. Be composed, we are quite a family

party—quite a large family, as you may see," added the prince of the science, who was on that day in a gay humour. "Come, let us finish."

More and more intimidated, Jeanne said, stammering and hesitating at each word, "I have had a quarrel with my husband, on the subject of my children; I mean to say, of my eldest daughter. He wished to take her away. I—you comprehend—I did not wish it on account of a vile woman, who might give bad advice to my child; then my husband, was drunk—oh! yes, except for that he would not have done it—my husband pushed me very hard; I fell, and then—a short time after, I began to throw up blood." "Bah, bah; your husband pushed you and you fell. You set it off very nicely. He has certainly done more than push you; he must have struck you very hard in the stomach, and, what is more, several times. Perhaps, also, he has trampled you under foot. Come, answer; tell me the truth." "Ah! I assure you he was drunk, otherwise he would not have been so wicked." "Good or wicked, drunk or sober, it has nothing to do with present matters; I am not a magistrate, my good woman; I only wish to establish a fact. You have been knocked down and trampled upon, have you not?" "Alas! yes," said Jeanne, bursting into tears; "and yet I have never given him cause for complaint. I work as much as I can, and I—" "The epigastrium must be painful? you must feel a great heat here?" said the doctor, interrupting Jeanne: "you must experience lassitude, uneasiness, nausea?" "Yes. I only came here at the last extremity, otherwise I would not have abandoned my children, for whom I am so much worried; and then Catherine—ah! it is on her account that I fear the most. If you knew—" "Your tongue!" said the doctor, again interrupting the patient. This order appeared so strange to Jeanne, who had thought to excite feelings of compassion in the doctor, that she did not at first comply with it, but looked at him with amazement. "Let us see this tongue of which you make such good use," said the doctor, smiling; then he held down, with the end of his finger, her under jaw. After causing the students to examine the tongue closely, in order to ascertain its colour and dryness, the doctor stepped back a moment. Jeanne, overcoming her fear, cried in a trembling voice, "I am going to tell you: some neighbours, as poor as myself, have been kind enough to take charge of my children, but for eight days only. That is a great deal. At the end of this

time, I must home. Thus, I entreat you, for the love of Heaven! cure me as soon as possible—or almost cure me, so, that I can get up and work. I have only eight days before me, for—" "Face discoloured—state of prostration complete; yet the pulse hard, strong and frequent," said the imperturbable doctor, looking at Jeanne.

"Remark it well, messieurs, oppression, heat at the epigastrium, all these symptoms certainly announce an *hematemese*, probably complicated, with hepatatis, caused by domestic sorrows, as the yellowish coloration of the globe of the eye indicates; the subject has received violent blows in the regions of the epigastrium and abdomen: the vomiting of blood is necessarily caused by some organic lesion of certain viscera. On this subject I will call your attention to a very curious point—very curious. The post mortem examination of those who die with the complaint of which this subject is attacked, offer results singularly variable; often the malady, very acute and very serious carries off the patient in a few days, and leaves no traces of its existence; at other times the spleen, the liver, the pancreas, present lesions more or less serious. It is probable that the subject before us has suffered some of these lesions; we are going, then, to try to assure ourselves of this fact, and you—you will also assure yourselves by an attentive examination of the patient." And with a rapid movement, Dr. Griffon, throwing the bed-clothes back, almost entirely uncovered Jeanne. It is repugnant to our feelings to depict the piteous struggles of this poor creature, who wept bitterly from shame, imploring the doctor and his auditory to leave her. But at this threat, "You will be turned out of the hospital if you do not submit to the established usages," a threat so overwhelming for those to whom the hospital is the last resource, Jeanne submitted to a public investigation, which lasted for a long time—a very long time; for the doctor analyzed and explained each symptom, and the more studious of the assistants wished to join practice to theory, and to have an occular assurance of the state of the patient. As a consequence of this cruel scene, Jeanne experienced an emotion so violent that she had a severe nervous attack, for which Doctor Griffon gave an additional prescription. The visit was continued.

The doctor soon reached the bed of Mademoiselle Claire de Fermont, a victim, as well as her mother, of the cupidity of Jacques Ferrand.

Mademoiselle de Fermont, wearing the linen cap furnished by

the hospital leaned her head in a languishing manner on the bolster of her bed: through the ravages of sickness could be traced, on this ingenuous and sweet face, the remains of distinguished beauty. After a night of bitter anguish, the poor child had fallen into a kind of feverish stupor before the doctor and his scientific cortége entered the hall; thus the noise attending his visit had not yet awakened her.

"A new subject," said the prince of the science, running his eyes over the card, which a student presented to him. "Disease, slow fever, nervous. Good!" cried the doctor with an expression of profound satisfaction; "if the attending physician is not mistaken in his diagnostic it is a most excellent windfall; I have desired a slow nervous fever for a long time, as this is not a malady of the poor. These affections are caused in almost every case by serious perturbations in the social position of the subject; and it cannot be denied that the more the position is elevated, the more profound are the perturbations. It is besides, an affection the more to be remarked from its peculiar character. It is traced back to the highest antiquity: the writings of Hippocrates leave no doubt on the subject: it is very plain; this fever, as I have said, is almost always caused by violent sorrows. Now, sorrow is as old as the world; yet, what is singular, before the eighteenth century, this malady was not described by any author; it is Huxman, who did so much honour to the profession at this epoch: it is Huxman, I say, who was the first to give a monography of the nervous fever, a monography which has become classic; and yet it was a malady of the old school," added the doctor, laughing. "But do not let us rejoice too much; let us, in effect, see if we have the happiness to possess a specimen of this curious affection. It would be doubly desirable, for I have wished for a long time to test the internal use of phosphorus: yes," repeated the doctor, on hearing a kind of murmur of curiosity among his auditory, "yes, phosphorus; it is a very curious experiment which I wish to make: it is bold; but, the occasion will be excellent. We are going in the first place, to examine if the subject presents on all parts of the body, and especially on the breast, this miliary eruption, so symptomatic, according to Huxman; and you will assure yourselves, by feeling the subject, of the kind of rugosity this eruption causes. But do not let us sell the skin of the bear before we bring him to the ground," added the prince of the science, who was unusually jocular.

And he slightly touched the shoulder of Mademoiselle de Fermont, to arouse her. The young girl shuddered, and opened her large eyes, sunken by disease. Let her terror and alarm be imagined. While a crowd of men surrounded her bed and followed her every motion with their eyes, she felt the hand of the doctor throw back the covering, and slipped into the bed in order to feel her pulse. Collecting all her strength, with a voice of anguish and affright she cried "Mother! help! my mother!" By a chance almost providential at the moment, when the cries of Mademoiselle de Fermont made the old Count de Saint Remy start from his chair, for he recognised the voice, the door of the hall opened, and a young woman, dressed in mourning, entered precipitately, accompanied by the director of the hospital.

This woman was the Marchioness d'Harville. "In mercy," said she to the director, with the greatest anxiety, "conduct me to Mademoiselle de Fermont." "Be good enough to follow me, Madame," answered the director, respectfully. "This demoiselle is at No. 17, in this hall." "Unfortunate child! here—here!" said Madame d'Harville, wiping her eyes; "ah! it is frightful."

The marchioness, preceded by the director, advanced rapidly towards the group assembled around the bed of Mademoiselle de Fermont, when these words were heard pronounced with indignation: "I tell you that it is murder—you will kill her." "But my dear Saint Remy, listen, then—" "I repeat to you, that your conduct is atrocious. I regard Mademoiselle de Fermont as my daughter. I forbid you to approach her: I will have her immediately removed hence." "But my dear friend, it is a case of slow nervous fever, very rare. I wish to try phosphorus. It is an unique occasion. Promise me at least that I shall take care of her. What matters it where you take her, since you deprive my clique of a subject so precious." "If you were not mad, you would be a monster," answered the Count de Saint Remy. Clemence listened to these words with increasing anguish; but the crowd was so dense, that the director was obliged to say in a loud voice. "Make room, if you please—make room for the Marchioness d'Harville, who comes to see No. 17." At these words, the students fell back with as much eagerness as respectful admiration, on seeing the charming face of Clemence, to which emotion had given a most lively colour. "Madame d'Harville," cried the Count de Saint Remy, pushing the doctor rudely aside, and advancing towards Clemence. "Ah! it is God who sends here one

of his angels. Madame, I knew that you had interested yourself for these unfortunates. More fortunate than I, you have found them; as for me, it was chance that brought me here, to behold a scene of unheard of barbarity. Unfortunate child! Do you see, madame—do you see? And you gentlemen in the name of your daughters, or your sisters, have pity on a child of sixteen, I entreat you; leave me alone with madame and the good sisters. As soon as she recovers a little, I will have her removed hence." "So be it. I will sign an order for her departure; but I will follow her steps—I will cling fast to her. It is a subject which belongs to me, and she will do well. I will take care of her. I will not experiment with the phosphorus: well understood, I will pass the night with her if it is necessary, as I have passed them with you, ungrateful Saint Remy; for this fever is quite as singular as yours. They are two sisters, who have the same claim to my interest." "Confounded man, why have you so much science?" said the count, knowing that, in truth, he could not confide Mademoiselle de Fermont to more skilful hands. "Eh! my God! it is very plain, whispered the doctor in his ear. "I have much science, because I experiment, because I risk and practice much on my subjects. Ah! shall I have my slow fever, old growler?" "Yes; but can this young girl be removed?" "Certainly." "Then, for Heaven's sake! retire."

"Come, gentlemen," said the prince of the science, "our school will be deprived of a precious study; but I will keep you informed of the case." And Doctor Griffon, accompanied by his numerous attendants continued his visit, leaving M. de Saint Remy and Madame d'Harville with Mademoiselle de Fermont.

CHAPTER VII.

FLEUR DE MARIE.

During the scene which we have just described, Mademoiselle de Fermont, still in her fainting fit, was delivered to the tender care and attentions of Clemence and the sisters; one of the latter sustained the drooping head of the young girl, while Madame d'Harville, leaning over the bed, wiped away with her handkerchief the cold sweat from the brow of the patient. Profoundly affected, M. de Saint Remy contemplated this touching picture, when a sudden thought struck him, and he drew near Clemence, and

said, in a low tone, "And the mother of this unfortunate, madame?" The marchioness turned towards M. de Saint Remy, and answered, with sadness. "This child has no longer a mother, sir." "Great God! dead!" "I only learned last night, at my return, the address of Madame de Fermont, and her alarming situation. At one o'clock in the morning I was with her, accompanied by my physician. Ah! sir, what a picture! poverty in all its horrors—and no hope of saving the expiring mother!" "Oh! how frightful must have been her agony, if the thought of her daughter was present!" "Her last words were, my daughter!" "What a death! my God; she, the tender mother, so devoted. It is terrible!" Here one of the sisters entered, interrupting the conversation of M. de Saint Remy and madame d'Harville, and said to the latter, "The young demoiselle is very feeble, she scarcely has any consciousness; in a short time she may revive. If you do not fear to remain there, madame, and wait until she comes to herself, I will offer you my chair." "Give to me," said Clemence, taking a seat alongside the bed. I will not take my eyes from her; I wish that she should, at least, see a friendly face when she recovers: then I will take her with me, since the doctor decides that she can be removed without danger." "Ah; madame, may God bless you for what you do," said M. de Saint Remy; "but pardon me for not having told you my name—so much sorrow; so much emotion;—I am Count de Saint Remy; the husband of Madame de Fermont was my most intimate friend. I live at Angiers. I left that city because I was uneasy at not having received any news from these two noble and worthy women. I have since heard that they have been completely ruined." "Ah; count you do not know all. Madame Fermont has been most cruelly despoiled;" "By her notary, perhaps? For a moment I had such a suspicion." "The man was a monster. Alas; this cruel crime is not his only one. But, happily," said Clemence, thinking of Rodolphe, "he has been compelled to make restitution; and in closing the eyes of Madame Fermont I have been able to assure her that her daughter is provided for. Her death thus had fewer pangs." "I comprehend; knowing that her daughter was under your protection, madame, my poor friend died more tranquilly." "Not only is my protection for ever secured to Mademoiselle de Fermont, but her fortune will also be restored." "Her fortune; How? The notary—" "Has been forced to restore her money, which he had appropriated to himself

by a horrid crime;" "A crime?" "This man assassinated the brother of Madame Fermont, and made her believe that this unfortunate man had committed suicide, after having dissipated her fortune." "This is horrible; it can hardly be credited; and yet I have had my doubts about this notary, for Renneville was honour itself. And this money—" "Is deposited with a venerable priest, the curate, of Bonne-nouvelle; he will hand it to Mademoiselle de Fermont." "This restitution is not sufficient for human justice, madame. The scaffold claims this notary, for he has not only committed one murder, but two. The death of Madame de Fermont, the sufferings which her daughter has endured on this hospital bed have been caused by the infamous abuse of confidence of this wretch." "And this wretch has committed another murder, quite as frightful." "What do you say, madame?" "If he made away with the brother of Madame Fermont by a pretended suicide, only a few days since he cruelly murdered a young girl, in whose destruction he was interested, by causing her to be drowned, certain that this would be attributed to accident."

M. de Saint Remy shuddered, looked at Madame d'Harville with surprise, and thinking of Fleur de Marie, cried "Ah! what a strange coincidence!" "What is the matter?" "This young girl! Where was it he wished to drown her?" "In the Seine, near Asnieres, I am told." "It is she! it is she!" cried M. de Saint Remy. "Of whom do you speak?" "Of the young girl this monster had an interest—" "Fleur de Marie?" "Do you know her, Madame?" "Poor child! I loved her tenderly. Ah! if you had known how beautiful she was! but how did you—" "Doctor Griffon and myself gave her the first assistance." "The first assistance? to her? and where?" "At the island of the Ravageurs, when she was saved." "Saved! Fleur de Marie! saved?" "By a good creature, who, at the risk of her life, drew her out of the Seine. But what is the matter, madame?" "Ah! I dare not believe in so much happiness. I entreat you, tell me—this young girl, describe her." "Of admirable beauty, and an angel face—" "Large blue eyes, flaxen hair?" "Yes, madame." "And when they tried to drown her, was she with an aged woman?" "In fact, it was only yesterday she could speak. She then mentioned that an old woman accompanied her." "God be praised!" cried Clemence, clasping her hands fervently. "I can inform him that his protégé still lives. What joy for him, who,

in his last letter, spoke of this poor child with such painful regret! Pardon me, sir; but if you knew how happy your information makes me, as well as another, who, still more than myself, has loved and protected Fleur de Marie! But I pray you, where is she at this moment?" "Near Asnieres, in the house of one of the physicians of this hospital, Doctor Griffon, who, notwithstanding some oddities which I deplore, has excellent qualities." "And she is now out of danger?" "Yes, madame; but only two or three days since. To-day, she is allowed to write to her protectors." "Oh! it is I, sir, it is I who will do this, or, rather, it is I, who will have the joy of conducting her to those who, believing her dead, regret her so bitterly." "I appreciate these regrets, madame; for it is impossible to know Fleur de Marie without being charmed with her angelic qualities: her grace and sweetness exercise on all those who approach her an unbounded influence. The woman who saved her, and has since watched her night and day, as she would have watched her own child, is a courageous and devoted person, but, of a temper so habitually violent that she has been called La Louve, judge. Well! a word from Fleur de Marie can calm her. I have heard her sob and utter cries of despair, when, at one time, Doctor Griffon had but little hopes of saving Fleur de Marie." "That does not astonish me, I know La Louve." "You, madame?" said Count Saint Remy, surprised; "You know La Louve?" "It must surprise you, truly," said the marchioness, smiling sweetly, for Clemence was happy, oh! very happy, in thinking of the joyful surprise she would cause the prince. What would have been her delight, if she had known that it was a daughter whom he believed dead, that she was about to restore to Rodolphe! "Ah!" said she to M. Saint Remy, "this is so joyful a day for me, that I wish it to be so for others; it seems to me that there must be many unfortunate persons here to succour, this would be an excellent way to express my gratitude, my joy, for the news you have given me." Then addressing one of the sisters, who had just given a drink to Mademoiselle de Fermont, she said, "Well, my sister, is she yet sensible?" "Not yet, Madame, she is so weak. Poor demoiselle! her pulse can hardly be felt." "I will wait until she is able to be removed in my carriage. But, tell me my sister, among all these unhappy sick, do you not know some who particularly merit my interest and pity, and to whom I can be useful before I leave the hospital." "Ah! madame, it is God who sends

you," said the sister; "There is," added she, pointing to the bed of the sister of Pique-Vinaigre, "a poor woman, very sick, and very much to be pitied: she mourns continually about two small children, who have no one to look to for support but herself. She told the doctor just now that she would leave here, cured or not cured, in eight days, as her neighbours had promised to take care of her children for that time only." "Conduct me to her bed, I pray you, my sister," said Madame d'Harville, rising, and following the "religieuse." Jeanne Duport, scarcely recovered from the violent attack caused by the treatment of Doctor Griffon, had not perceived the entrance of the marchioness into the hospital. What was her surprise, then, when the marchioness, lifting up the curtains of her bed, said to her, with a look full of kindness and commiseration, "My good mother, you must not be any longer uneasy about your children; I will take care of them, only think of being soon cured, so that you can join them."

Jeanne Duport thought that she was in a dream. In the same place where Doctor Griffon and his students had made her submit to such a cruel ordeal, she saw a young woman of surpassing beauty come to her with words of pity, consolation, and hope. The emotion of the sister of Pique-Vinaigre was so great that she could not utter a word; she clasped her hands as if in prayer, looking at her unknown benefactress with adoration. "Jeanne, Jeanne," whispered La Lorraine, "speak to this good lady." Then addressing the marchioness, she said, "Ah! madame, you save her; she would have died with despair in thinking of her poor destitute children." "Once more re-assure yourself, my good mother—have no uneasiness," repeated the marchioness, pressing in her small white hand the burning one of Jeanne Duport. "Re-assure yourself; be no longer uneasy concerning your children; and, if you prefer it, you shall leave the hospital to-day; you shall be nursed at home—nothing shall be wanting. In this way you shall not leave your dear children; from this time I will see that you do not want for work, and I will attend to the future welfare of your children." "Ah! what do I hear? The cherubim descend, then, from heaven, as is written in the church books," said Jeanne Duport, trembling, and scarcely daring to look at her benefactress. "Why so much goodness for me? How have I deserved this? It cannot be possible! I leave the hospital, where I have wept so much, suffered so much! not leave my children any more! have a nurse! why, it is a miracle of the

good God!" And the poor woman spoke the truth. If one only knew how sweet and easy it is to perform often, and at a small expense, these miracles! Alas! for these poor unfortunates, abandoned and repulsed on all sides—an instantaneous unhoped-for assistance, accompanied by benevolent words of consideration, tenderly commiserative, ought it not to have, has it not, the supernatural appearance of a miracle! "It is not a miracle, my good mother," answered Clemence, much affected; "that which I do for you," added she, slightly blushing at the recollection of Rodolphe, "that which I do for you is inspired by a generous being, who has taught me to relieve the unfortunate: it is he whom you must bless and thank." "Ah! madame! I shall bless you and yours," said Jeanne Duport, weeping. "I ask your pardon for expressing myself so badly. I am not accustomed to such great joy; it is the first time it has happened to me." "Well! do you see, Jeanne," said La Lorraine, weeping, "there are also among the rich some Rigolettes and Goualeuses on a large scale, it is true; but as to the good heart, it is the same thing!"

Madame d'Harville turned towards La Lorraine, much surprised at hearing her pronounce these two names. "You know La Goualeuse and a young workwoman named Rigolette?" demanded Clemence of La Lorraine. "Yes, madame,—La Goualeuse—dear little angel—did last year for me—but, dame! according to her poor means that which you do for Jeanne. Yes, madame—oh! it does me good to say and repeat to every one, that La Goualeuse took me from a cellar where I was confined on some straw; and the dear little angel removed me and my child to a room where there was a good bed and a cradle. La Goualeuse did this out of pure charity; for she scarcely knew me, and was very poor herself. That was very kind, was it not madame?" said La Lorraine, excited. "Oh! yes; the charity of the poor towards the poor is holy," said Clemence, her eyes bathed in tears. "It was just the same with Rigolette, who, according to her means," replied La Lorraine, "offered her services, a few days since, to Jeanne."

"What a singular coincidence!" said Clemence to herself, more and more affected; for each of these two names, La Goualeuse and Rigolette, recalled a noble action of Rodolphe. "And you, my child, what can I do for you?" said she to La Lorraine. "I wish the names that you have just pronounced with so much

gratitude shall bring you good fortune." "Thank you, madame," said Lorraine, with a smile of bitter resignation.

"I had a child—it is dead. I am in a consumption, and am in a hopeless state. I have no longer need of anything." "What gloomy thoughts! At your age—so young—there is always some remedy." "Oh! no, madame, I know my fate: I saw a person die last night—here—with the same disease; it is an easy death. I thank you for your goodness."

"You magnify your danger." "I am not mistaken, madame; I know it well. But since you are so kind—a great lady like you is all-powerful." "Speak, say, what do you wish?" "I have asked a service of Jeanne; but since, thanks to the good God and you, she is going away." "Ah well! this service, can I not render it?" "Certainly, madame: one word from you to the sisters, or to the physician, would arrange all." "This word? I will speak it, be assured." "Since I have seen the actress, who is dead, so tormented by the fear of being cut up after her death, I have had the same fear. Jeanne promised to come and claim my body, and have me buried." "Ah! it is horrible?" said Clemence, shuddering with affright. "One must come here to know that there is for the poor, misery and alarms even beyond the tomb." "Pardon, madame," said La Lorraine, timidly: "for a great lady rich and happy as you deserve to be, this request is a very sad one: I ought not to have made it!" "I thank you, on the contrary, my child: it teaches me a misery of which I was ignorant, and this knowledge shall not be fruitless. Be comforted: although this fatal moment may be far off, when it does arrive, you shall be sure to repose on holy ground." "Oh! thank you madame;" cried La Lorraine. "If I might dare to ask permission to kiss your hand." Clemence presented her hand to the parched lips of La Lorraine. "Oh; thank you, madame. I shall have some one to pray for and bless to the end, with La Goualeuse, and I shall be no longer sad, for after my death—" This resignation, and these fears beyond the tomb, had painfully affected Madame d'Harville; she whispered to the sister who came to inform her that Mademoiselle de Fermont was completely restored. "Is the condition of this young woman really desperate?" "Alas! yes, madame; La Lorraine is given up; she has not, perhaps, eight days to live." * * * *

Half an hour afterward, Madame d'Harville, accompanied by Count Saint Remy, took with her, to her own house, the young or-

phan, from whom she had concealed the death of the mother. The same day an agent of Madame d'Harville, after having visited in the Rue de Barillerie, the miserable abode of Jeanne Duport, and having received the most favourable accounts of this worthy woman, immediately hired on the Quay de l'Ecole two large rooms and a cabinet; thanks to the resources of the Temple, they were furnished in two hours, and the same evening Jeanne Duport was removed to this dwelling, where she found her children and an excellent nurse. The same agent was instructed to claim the body of La Lorraine, whenever she should sink under her malady, and have it decently interred. * * *

After having installed Mademoiselle de Fermont in her apartment, Madame d'Harville set out at once for Asnieres, accompanied by Count Saint Remy, in order to conduct Fleur de Marie to Rodolphe.

CHAPTER VIII.

HOPE.

THE first days of spring approached, the sun began to resume its power, the sky was pure, the air soft and mild. Fleur de Marie, leaning on the arm of La Louve, tried her strength by walking in the garden of Doctor Griffon. The vivifying warmth of the sun and the action of walking coloured with a rosy tint the pale and thin cheeks of the Goualeuse; her peasant's costume having been torn in the agitation attending the first assistance that had been rendered her, she wore a dress of dark blue merino, made like a blouse, and only confined around her delicate and slender waist by a woollen girdle.

"How pleasant the sun is!" said she to La Louve, stopping at the foot of a hedge of green trees exposed to the south, and which surrounded a stone bench. "Will you sit down here a moment, La Louve?" "Is there any need of asking me if I will?" answered the wife of Martial, shrugging up her shoulders. Then taking from her neck a silk shawl, she folded it carefully, knelt down, laid it on the slightly damp gravel of the walk, and said to La Goualeuse, "place yourself there." "But, La Louve," said Fleur de Marie, who had perceived the design of her companion too late to prevent its execution, "but, La Louve, you will injure your shawl." "None of your arguments, the ground is damp,"

said La Louve, and taking the small feet of Fleur de Marie in her hands, she placed them on the shawl.

"How you spoil me, La Louve!" "Hum! you do not deserve it; always contending against that which I wish to do for your good. Are you not fatigued? Here is a good half-hour that we have been walking. Noon has just struck at Asnieres." "I am slightly tired; but I feel that this walk has done me good." "You see, you were tired, you could not ask me sooner to sit down." "Do not scold me; I did not know that I was so weak." "It is so pleasant to walk after having been confined to the bed so long—to see the sun, the trees, the country, when one has thought never to see them again." "The fact is, that you have been in a very dangerous state for two days. Poor Goualeuse! Yes, now we can tell you that your life was despaired of." "And then imagine, that on finding myself under the water, the recollection flashed across my mind that a wicked woman, who had badly treated me when I was very little, had always threatened to throw me to the fishes. Then I said to myself, I have no good fortune—it is fated that I shall not escape." "Poor Goualeuse! was this your last thought when you supposed yourself lost?"

"Oh! no," said Fleur de Marie, warmly; "when I felt myself about to die, my last thought was of him whom I regard as, my benefactor; so, also, when I was recalled back to life, my first thought was of him." "It is a pleasure to confer benefits on you; you do not forget them." "Oh! no! it is so pleasant to fall asleep and dream of one's gratitude, and on awakening to remember it still." "Ah! one would go through fire to serve you." "Good Louve; Hold; I assure you that one of the causes which render me desirous to live, is the hope of conferring happiness on you; of accomplishing my promise; you remember our castles in the air at Saint Lazare?" "As to that there is time enough; now you are on your feet again, I have made my expenses as Martial says." "I hope that Count Saint Remy will tell me, directly, that the physician will allow me to write to Madame Georges. She must be so uneasy. And perhaps Rodolphe, also;" added Fleur de Marie, casting down her eyes, and blushing anew at the thought of her benefactor. "Perhaps they think me dead!" "As those believe, also, who ordered you to be drowned, poor dear! Oh! the brigands!" "You always suppose, then, that it was not accident, La Louve?" "An accident?

Yes the Martials call them *accidents*. When I say the Martials, it is without counting my man, for he is not of that family, no more than François or Amandine shall be." "But what interest could any one have in my death? I have never harmed any one; no one knows me." "It is all one, if the Martials are scoundrels enough to drown some one, they are not fools enough to do it for nothing. Some words which the widow made use of in prison, to my Martial, prove this." "He has been to see his mother, then? this terrible woman!" "Yes, there is no hope for her, nor for Calebasse, nor for Nicolas. Many things have been discovered, but this Nicolas, in hope of saving his life, has denounced his mother, and his sister for another assassination. On this account they will be all executed; the lawyers have no hope, the judges say that an example is necessary." "Ah! it is frightful; almost a whole family." "Yes, unless Nicolas makes his escape; he is in the same prison with a monster bandit called Skeleton, who has a plot on foot to escape. Nicolas told this to a prisoner who was discharged, and he informed Martial, for my Martial has been weak enough to go and see his brother at La Force. Then, encouraged by this visit, this wretch has had the impudence to send word to his brother that from one moment to another he might escape, and that Martial shonld hold himself ready at Micou's, with money, and clothes for a disguise." "Your Martial has so kind a heart!" "Kind heart as much as you please, La Goualeuse, but may the devil—if I let my husband aid an assassin who has wished to kill me. Martial will not denounce the plot; that is already a great deal. Besides, now that you are nearly well, La Goualeuse, we are going to start with the children on our tour through France; we will never plant our feet in Paris again; it was painful enough for Martial to be called the son of the guillotined; what will it be when mother, brother, and sister are also executed." "You will wait, at least, until I have spoken to Rodolphe concerning you, if I see him again. You have become changed; I told you that I would reward you, and I wish to keep my word; otherwise how can I pay the debt I owe you? You have saved my life; and during my illness you overwhelmed me with attentions." "Exactly; now I should seem self-interested if I allowed you to ask anything for me from your protectors. You are saved; I repeat to you that I have made my expenses." "Good Louve, re-assure yourself; it is not you who are self-interested, it is I who am grateful." "Listen, then!" said La

Louve, suddenly rising; "it sounds like the noise of a carriage. Yes, yes, it approaches; hold! there it is; did you see it pass before the gate? there is a lady within." "Oh! my God!" cried Fleur de Marie, with emotion; "I thought I recognised—" "Whom?" "A young and handsome lady whom I saw at Saint Lazare, and who was very kind to me."

"Is she aware, then, that you are here?" "I do not know; but she is acquainted with the person of whom I have spoken, and who (if he wish, and he will, I hope) can make a reality of our Saint Lazare castles in the air." A noise of footsteps approaching rapidly was heard behind the hedge: François and Amandine, who, thanks to the kindness of the Count Saint Remy, had not left La Louve, came rushing into the garden, crying, "La Louve, there is a fine lady with Count Saint Remy; they want to see Fleur de Marie at once." "I was not mistaken," said La Goualeuse. Almost at the same moment, Saint Remy appeared, accompanied by Madame d'Harville. Hardly had she perceived Fleur de Marie, than she cried, running towards her and pressing her in her arms, "Poor dear child! I see you again. Ah! saved! saved miraculously from a horrible death! With what happiness do I find you; I, who as well as your friends, thought that you were lost for ever." "I am also very happy to see you again, madame; for I have never forgotten your kindness to me," said Fleur de Marie, returning the tender caresses of Madame d'Harville with charming modesty. "Ah! you do not know what will be the surprise, the wild joy of your friends, who, at this moment weep for you so bitterly." Fleur de Marie, taking the hand of La Louve, who had withdrawn a short distance, said to Madame d'Harville, presenting her. "Since my safety is so dear to my benefactors, madame, permit me to bespeak through you, their kindness for my companion, who saved me at the risk of her life." "Be assured, my child; your friends will prove to the brave Louve that they know it is to her they owe the happiness of seeing you again." La Louve, blushing, confused, daring neither to answer nor raise her eyes towards Madame d'Harville, so much did the presence of a woman of her rank abash her, could not conceal her astonishment at hearing Clemence pronounce her name. "But there is not a moment to lose," said Clemence, "I am dying with impatience to take you with me, Fleur de Marie; I have brought in my carriage a shawl and a warm cloak; come, come, my child. Then addressing the count, she added, "Will you be good enough

to give my address to this courageous woman, so that she can come to-morrow and say farewell to Fleur de Marie? So, you will be obliged to come and see us," she said to La Louve. "Oh! madame, I will come, very sure," answered she, "since it is to say adieu to La Goualeuse; I should be very sad not to be able to see her once more." * * A few moments afterwards, Madame d'Harville and Marie were on the road to Paris. * *

Rodolphe, after having beheld the death of Ferrand, so terribly punished for his crimes, had returned home in a state of deep dejection. After a long and sleepless night, he had sent for Sir Walter Murphy, to confide to this old and faithful friend the heart-rending discovery concerning Fleur de Marie, that he had made the previous evening. The worthy knight was overwhelmed; better than any other person, he could comprehend and partake of the profound grief of the prince. The latter, pale, prostrated, his eyes red from weeping, had just made to Murphy this painful revelation. "Take courage!" said the knight, wiping his eyes; for, notwithstanding his firmness, he had also wept. "Yes, take courage. I offer no vain consolations: this sorrow has no cure." "You are right. What I felt yesterday is nothing compared to my present sufferings." "Yesterday you felt the shock; but the reaction will each day be more grievous. Therefore, call up all your energy. The future is sad, very sad." "And then, yesterday, the contempt and horror with which this woman inspired me! but may God have pity on her, for at this moment she is before him. Yesterday, surprise, hatred, fright, so many violent passions smothered within me these elements of despairing tenderness, that at present I can restrain myself no longer: I can hardly weep. And yet now, with you, I can. Hold! you see I have no strength: I am cowardly: pardon me. Tears again, always: oh! my child! my poor child!" "Weep, weep. Alas! the loss is irreparable." "And so many dreadful miseries to make her forget," cried Rodolphe, in a touching tone, "after all that she has suffered: Think of the change which awaited her." "Perhaps this transition might have been too abrupt for the unfortunate already so cruelly tried." "Oh! no, no, not so. If you knew with what delicacy, with what reserve, I should have apprised her of her birth; how gently I should gave prepared her for this revelation; it was so simple, so easy. Oh! if this were the only question, do you see," added the prince, with a bitter smile, "I should have been composed, and not embarrassed. Throwing

myself on my knees before the idolized child, I would have said, "You, who have been until now so cruelly treated, be at length, happy—and for ever happy. You are my daughter. But no," said Rodolphe, "no, that is not it; that would have been too hasty too rash. Yes, I would have restrained myself, and said to her, in a calm manner, 'My child, I must tell you something that will astonish you much. Yes; imagine that they have discovered traces of your parents; your father lives, and your father—I am your father." Here the prince again interrupted himself. "No, no; this is also too sudden, too abrupt; but it is not my fault that this revelation is always springing to my lips; one must have more self command—you comprehend, my friend?" "To be there, before your daughter, and restrain your feelings." Then, giving way again to despair, Rodolphe cried, "But to what purpose these vain words? I shall never speak to her again. Oh! that which is frightful to think of, is, that I have had my daughter near me during a whole day: yes, that day, for ever accursed, on which I took her to the farm; that day, when all the treasures of her angelic mind were revealed to me in all their purity, and nothing in my heart whispered, 'She is your daughter:' nothing; nothing. Oh! how blind, stupid I was, not to imagine this. I was unworthy to be a father."

"But, my lord—" "But in truth," cried the prince, "did it not depend upon myself whether I should ever leave her? Why did I not adopt her? I, who lament so much for my child? Why, instead of sending this unfortunate child to Madame Georges, did I not keep her with me? To-day I should only have had to extend my arms to her. Why have I not done that? Why? Ah! because one only does good by halves; because one only values treasures when they have disappeared for ever; because, instead of raising at once to her true level this admirable young girl, who, in spite of misery and abandonment, was, through her mind and heart, greater, nobler, perhaps, than she ever would have been by the advantages of birth and education. I thought I was doing much for her, by placing her at a farm with some good people, as I would for the first interesting beggar that I met in the streets. It is my fault—it is my fault. If I had done that, she would not have been dead. Oh! yes, I am punished; I have deserved it—a bad son, bad father!"

Murphy knew that such grief was inconsolable, and remained silent. "I shall not remain here—Paris is hateful to me; to-mor-

row I go—" "You are right, my lord." "We will stop at the farm of Bouqueval. I will shut myself up for some hours in her chamber, where she passed the only happy days of her life. I will have collected with religious care all that belonged to her: the books she commenced to read; the paper she had written on; the clothes she has worn—all, even to the furniture, even the tapestry of her rooms, of which I myself will take an exact delineation. And at Gerolstein, in the private park where I have raised a monument to the memory of my outraged father, I will have a small house built, in which shall be constructed this *room*; there I will go to weep for my daughter. Of these two funeral monuments, one will recall my crime to my father, the other the chastisement which reached me through my child. Thus, then, let everything be prepared to-morrow morning."

Murphy, willing to try if he could not turn the prince a moment from his gloomy thoughts, said, "All shall be ready, only you forget that to morrow the marriage of the son of Madame Georges and Rigolette takes place. Not only have you made a provision for Germain and munificently endowed the bride, but you have also promised to be present at the wedding as a witness. Then are they to be informed of the name of their benefactor."

"It is true, I have promised. They are at the farm, and I cannot go there to-morrow without being present at this fête, and I confess I have not the courage."

"The sight of the happiness of these young people will perhaps, calm your sorrow." "No, no, grief is selfish, and seeks retirement. To-morrow you will go in my place; and you will beg Madame Georges to collect everything belonging to my daughter. Let a plan of her room be made, and sent to me in Germany." "Will you depart without seeing Clemence?" At the name of Clemence, Rodolphe shuddered: he still cherished for her a sincere attachment, but at this moment it was, thus to speak drowned in the waves of bitterness which inundated his heart. By a strange contradiction, the prince felt that the tender affection of Madame d'Harville would alone have aided him to support the grief which overwhelmed him, and he reproached this thought as unworthy the fervency of his paternal grief. "I shall go without seeing Madame d'Harville," answered Rodolphe. "A few days since I wrote to her how much I sorrowed for the death of Fleur de Marie. When she knows that Fleur de Marie was my daughter, she will comprehend the grief that seeks to be alone—yes,

alone, so that it may be expiatory; and it is terrible, that expiation which fate imposes on me—terrible! for it commences, for me, at the time when the decline of life also commences."

Some one knocked lightly and discreetly at the door; Rodolphe made a movement of impatience; Murphy rose and went to see who was there. Through the half open door, an aid-de-camp of the prince said a few words to the knight in a low tone. He answered by a sign, and turning towards Rodolphe, said—"Will you permit me to be absent for a moment? Some one wishes to speak to me on business of importance." "Go," answered the prince. Hardly had Murphy departed, than Rodolphe, uttering a heavy sigh, concealed his face in his hands. "Oh;" cried he, "that which I feel alarms me. My heart overflows with hatred; the presence of my best friend weighs me down; the memory of a pure and noble love importunes and troubles me, and then—it is cowardly and unworthy. But last night I learned, with savage joy, the death of Sarah—of this unnatural mother, who has caused the death of my child, I amused myself in beholding the ravings and torments of the horrid monster who killed my daughter—oh madness;—I arrived too late. Yet, yesterday I did not suffer so; and yesterday, as to day, I thought my child dead—oh; yes; but I did not say to myself these words, which henceforth will imbitter my life: I have seen my daughter; I have spoken to her; I have admired all that was adorable in her. Oh; how much time I might have passed at that farm. When I think that I only went there three times; yes, no more; and I could have gone there every day—to see my child every day; What do I say? to keep her ever with me. Oh! such shall be my punishment."

Suddenly the door of the cabinet opened, and Murphy entered; he was very pale—so pale that the prince half arose, and cried, "Murphy, what is the matter?" "Nothing, my lord." "You are very pale." "It is; the astonishment;" "What astonishment?" "Madame d'Harville!" "Madame d'Harville? My God! some new misfortune." "No, no, my lord, re-assure yourself; she is there, in the saloon." "She here! she in my house; it is impossible." "Thus, my lord; I tell you, the surprise—" "Such a step on her part; but what is the matter, in the name of heaven?" "I cannot explain what I feel." "You conceal something from me." "On my honour, no. I do not know what the marchioness meant." "But what did she say?" "'Sir

Walter,' and although her voice trembled, her face was beaming with joy, 'my presence here must surprise you very much; but there are certain circumstances so important, that they leave no time to think of appearances. Entreat his highness to grant me immediately, an audience in your presence; for I know that the prince has no better friend. I should have begged him to come to my own house, but that would have delayed our interview for an hour, which the prince will confess should not have been retarded a moment,' added she, with an expression that made me tremble." "But," said Rodolphe, in a broken voice, and becoming still paler than Murphy, "I cannot imagine the cause of your trouble; of your emotion; of your looks; there is something else; this interview—" "On my honour, I do not know anything more. These words alone of the marchioness have unsettled me. Why, I am ignorant. But you yourself—you are very pale, my lord." "I?" said Rodolphe supporting, himself on the chair for he felt his knees giving way under him. "I tell you, my lord, that you are as much disturbed as I am. What is the matter?" "Although I should die under the blow, beg Madame d'Harville to enter," cried the prince. By a strange sympathy, the visit, so unexpected, so extraordinary, had awakened in both Murphy and Rodolphe a certain vague and indefinite hope; but this hope seemed so extravagant, that neither one nor the other dared to avow it.

Madame d'Harville, followed by Murphy, entered the cabinet of the prince.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

Ignorant, as we have said that Fleur de Marie was the daughter of the prince Madame d'Harville, in her joy at bringing back his protgée, had thought she would be able to present her to him without any previous preparation; she had left her in the carriage at the door, as she did not know whether the prince was willing to make himself known to the young girl, and receive her in his own house. But perceiving the great alteration in the looks of Rodolphe, and remarking in his eyes the traces of recent tears, Clemence thought he had met with some misfortune more severe than the death of La Goualeuse; thus, forgetting the object of her visit, she cried; "Gracious God! my lord, what is the

matter?" "Are you ignorant, madame? Ah! all hope is lost. Your haste; the interview you have so earnestly demanded; I thought;" "Oh! I entreat you, let us not speak of the object of my visit. In the name of my father, whose life you saved, I have almost the right to demand from you the cause of affliction in which you are plunged. Your state of dejection, your paleness, alarms me. Oh! speak, my lord; be generous; speak; have pity on my distress." "For what good, madame? my wound is incurable." "These words redouble my alarm; explain yourself. My God! what is it?" "Eh well!" said Rodolphe, in a hollow voice, making a violent effort to restrain himself, "since I informed you of the death of Fleur de Marie, I have learned that she was my child." "Fleur de Marie your child!" cried Clemence, in a tone impossible to be described. "Yes; and just now, when you asked to see me immediately, to inform me of something that would overwhelm me with joy—have pity on my weakness—but a father, mad with grief at the loss of his child, is capable of indulging in many mad hopes. For a moment I thought—that—but no, no; I see it—I deceived myself. Pardon me; I am but a miserable, foolish man." Rodolphe, exhausted by the violence of his feelings, fell back in his chair, covering his face with his hands. Madame d'Harville remained stupified, immovable, dumb, breathing with difficulty—in turns a prey to joy, to fear for the effect which the revelation she was about to make might have upon the prince—in fine, exalted by a holy gratitude towards Providence, who intrusted her—*her*—to announce to Rodolphe that his daughter lived, and she had brought her back to him. Clemence, agitated by these emotions, so violent, so diverse, could not utter a word. Murphy, after having for a moment partaken of the mad hopes of the prince, seemed quite as much overcome as he was. Suddenly the marchioness, yielding to an unexpected and involuntary emotion, forgetting the presence of Murphy and Rodolphe, sank on her knees, clasped her hands, and cried, with an expression of fervent piety and ineffable gratitude: "Thanks! God be praised! I acknowledge thy sovereign will. Thanks once more, for thou hast chosen me to inform him that his child is saved." Although said in a low voice, these words, pronounced in a tone of sincere and holy fervour, reached the ears of Murphy and the prince. The latter raised his head quickly at the moment Clemence arose from the ground. It is impossible to describe

the look, the gesture, the expression of Rodolphe, on contemplating Madame Harville whose charming features, stamped with a celestial joy, shone at this moment with superhuman beauty. Leaning with one hand on the marble table, and compressing with the other the rapid pulsations of her heart, she gave an affirmative nod of the head in answer to a look from Rodolphe, which once more we are unable to describe.

"Below—in my carriage."

Save the presence of Murphy, who, quick as lightning, threw himself before Rodolphe, he would have rushed at once to the street. "My lord, you would kill her!" cried the squire, holding back the prince. "Only since yesterday she has been convalescent. For her life, no imprudence, my lord," added Clemence. "You are right," said Rodolphe, restraining himself with difficulty; "you are right, I will be calm, I will not see her yet, I will wait; let my first emotions be controlled. Ah! it is too much, too much in one day," added he, in a broken voice. Then addressing Madame d'Harville, and extending his hand towards her, he cried, with a burst of inexpressible gratitude: "I am pardoned! You are the angel of mercy." "My lord, you restored to me my father; God willed that I should bring back your child," answered Clemence. "But, in my turn, I ask your pardon for my weakness. This revelation, so sudden, so unexpected, has confused me. I confess that I have not the courage to go for Fleur de Marie, my agitation would alarm her." "And how was she saved?" cried Rodolphe. "See my ingratitude. I have not yet asked you this question." "At the moment she was drowning, she was rescued from a watery grave by a courageous woman." "Do you know her?" "To-morrow she will come to see me." "The debt is immense," said the prince, "but I shall know how to pay it."

"What a happy circumstance, oh God! that I did not bring Fleur de Marie with me," said the marchioness; "this scene would have been fatal to her." "It is true, madame," said Murphy; "it is a providential chance that she is not here." "Now," said the prince, who had for a few moments been endeavouring to conquer his emotions, "now I have self command, I assure you. Murphy, go and seek *my daughter*." These words, *my daughter*, were pronounced by the prince with an accent we will not attempt to express. "My lord, are you quite sure of yourself?" said Clemence. "No imprudence." "Oh! be tran-

quil. I know the danger there would be for her, I will not expose her to it. My good Murphy, I entreat you; go, go!" "Reassure yourself, madame," answered the squire, who had attentively observed the prince; she can come. My lord will restrain himself." "Then go, go quickly, my old friend." "Yes, my lord; I ask but for a moment, one is not made of iron," said the good man, wiping away the traces of his tears; "she must not see that I have been weeping." "Excellent man!" replied Rodolphe, cordially pressing his hand. "Come, let us go; I am ready. I did not wish to pass through the hall all in tears, like a Magdalen. But, my lord, what shall I say?" "Yes; what shall he say?" demanded the prince, of Clemence. "That Rodolphe wishes to see her; nothing more, it seems to me." "It is certainly the very best thing that can be said to her," answered the squire. "I will merely say that Mr. Rodolphe wishes to see her; that will not cause her to conjecture any thing, to foresee anything." But Sir Walter did not stir. "Sir Walter," said Clemence, smiling, "you are afraid." "It is true, madame; in spite of my six feet and my rough exterior, I am still under the influence of violent emotions." "My friend, take care," said Rodolphe; wait a moment longer, if you are not sure of your self-possession." "Now for it, my lord; this time I am victorious," said the squire, after having passed over his eyes his Herculean hand. "Really at my age, this weakness is perfectly ridiculous. Fear nothing." And Murphy left the room with a firm step and tranquillized air. A moment of silence ensued; then Clemence, blushing, remembered that she was in Rodolphe's house, and alone with him. The prince approached, and said, almost timidly, "If I choose this day, this moment, to make you a sincere avowal, it is because the solemnity of this day, this moment, will add still more to the gravity of the confession. Ever since I have known you I have loved you. So long as the concealment of this love was necessary, I concealed it; now that you are free, and have restored me my daughter, will you be to her a mother?" "I, my lord!" cried Madame d'Harville. "What say you?" "I entreat you, do not refuse me; let this day decide my future happiness," said Rodolphe, tenderly. Clemence also had loved the prince for a long time; she thought she was in a dream. The avowal of Rodolphe; this avowal, at once so simple, so serious, so touching, made under such circumstances, transported her with an unhoped-for happiness; she answered, hesitatingly,

"My lord, it is for you to call to mind the difference of the rank, the interest of your sovereignty." "First let me think of the interest of my heart, of that of my cherished daughter; make us both happy, oh! very happy. Permit me, who, but now was without family, to say, 'my wife; my daughter;' allow this poor child, she who was also without family, allow her to say, 'My father, my mother, my sister;' for you have a daughter who will become mine." "Ah! my lord, to such noble words one can only answer by grateful tears," cried Clemence. Then, composing herself, she added, "My lord, some one comes; it is your child." "Ah! do not refuse me," cried Rodolphe, in a supplicating voice; in the name of my love, say *our* child." "Eh well! *our* child," murmured Clemence; at the same moment, Murphy opened the door, leading in Fleur de Marie.

The young girl, descending from the carriage of the Marchioness, had crossed a first ante-chamber, filled with footmen in grand livery; a waiting-room, where valets attended; then the saloon of the huissiers; and finally, the waiting-hall, occupied by a chamberlain and the aids-de-camp of the prince in full uniform. Let the reader imagine the astonishment of poor Marie, who knew no other splendours than those of the farm at Bouqueval, on traversing these princely apartments, resplendent with gold, mirrors, and paintings. As soon as she appeared, Madame d'Harville ran towards her, took her by the hand, and placing her arm around her for support, she conducted her towards the prince, who, standing near the chimney, had not been able to move. Murphy, after having confided Fleur de Marie to the care of Madame d'Harville hastily disappeared behind the folds of one of the immense window-curtains, finding that he was not altogether sure of his self-possession.

At the sight of her benefactor, her saviour, who regarded her with silent ecstasy, Fleur de Marie, already so agitated, began to tremble. "Compose yourself, my child," said Madame d'Harville; "there is your friend, Rodolphe, who awaits you impatiently; he has been very uneasy about you." "Oh! yes, very—very uneasy," said Rodolphe, still immovable, and whose heart was almost breaking at the sight of the sweet and pale face of his child. Thus, in spite of his resolution, the prince was for a moment obliged to turn his head to conceal his emotion. "Hold! my child, you are still very weak; sit down there," said Clemence, to turn her attention from the prince; and she led her to a large

arm-chair of bronze and gilt, in which the Goualeuse seated herself. Her agitation increased every moment, she was oppressed, speech failed her; she had not a word of gratitude for Rodolphe. At length, on a sign from Madame d'Harville, who was leaning on the back of the chair, and holding one of Fleur de Marie's hands in her own, the prince approached softly to the other side of the seat. With more self-command, he then said to Fleur de Marie, who turned towards him her enchanting face; "At length, my child, you are once more re-united to your friends, and for ever! You never shall leave them more. Now you must forget what you have suffered." "Yes, my child, the best way to prove that you love us," added Clemence, "is to forget the past." "Believe me, Mr. Rodolphe—believe me, madame, that if I do recall it sometimes, it will only be to say to myself, that, without you, I should still be very unhappy." "Yes; but we will take care that you have no more such gloomy thoughts. Our tenderness will not leave you this time, my dear Marie," answered Rodolphe; for you know that I gave you this name at the farm." "Yes, Mr. Rodolphe. And Madame Georges, who allowed me to call her mother, is she well?" "Very well, my child. But I have important news to tell you." "Me, Mr. Rodolphe?" "Since I have seen you, great discoveries have been made concerning your birth." "My birth?" "It is known who were your parents, who was your father." Rodolphe was so much choked by his tears on his pronounciug these words, that Fleur de Marie, very much affected, turned quickly towards him: he had turned away his head. An incident, half burlesque, diverted the attention of La Goualeuse, and prevented her from remarking more closely the emotion of her father: the worthy squire, who still remained behind the curtain, and apparently, was very attentively looking into the garden of the hotel, could not refrain from blowing his nose, with a most formidable noise, for he wept like a child. "Yes, my dear Marie, Clemence hastened to say, "your father is known, he still lives." "My father!" cried Marie, with an expression which put the composure of Rodolphe to a new trial. "And some day," resumed Clemence, "very soon, perhaps, you will see him. What will doubtless surprise you very much is, that he is of high standing, noble birth." "And my mother, madame, shall I see her?" "Your father will answer this question, my child; but shall you not be very happy to see him?" "Oh! yes, madame," answered Fleur de Marie, casting down

her eyes. "How much you will love him, when you know him," said the marchioness.

"From that day forward, a new life will commence for you; is it not so, Marie?" added the prince. "Oh! no, Mr. Rodolphe," answered Marie, naively. "My new life commenced on the day you took pity on me; when you sent me to the farm." "But your father will cherish you," said the prince. "I do not know him, and to you I owe all, Mr. Rodolphe." "Then you love me as much, more, perhaps, than you would love your father?" "I bless you, and I respect you as I do my God, Mr. Rodolphe, because you have done for me that which God alone could have done," answered Marie, with enthusiasm. "When madame had the goodness to speak to me in prison, I said to her what I said to everybody—yes, Mr. Rodolphe, to those who were very unfortunate I said, 'Hope! Mr. Rodolphe succours the unfortunate. To those who hesitated between good and evil, I said, 'Courage, be virtuous; Mr. Rodolphe rewards those who are virtuous.' To those who were wicked, I said, 'Take care! Mr. Rodolphe punishes the wicked.' In fine, when I thought I was about to die, I said to myself, 'God will have mercy upon me, for Mr. Rodolphe has judged me worthy of his interest."

Fleur de Marie, carried away by her gratitude towards her benefactor, had overcome her fears; a slight carnation tinged her cheeks, and her beautiful blue eyes, which she raised towards heaven as if in prayer, shone with the softest lustre.

A silence of some seconds succeeded the enthusiastic words of Fleur de Marie; the emotions which affected the actors in this scene were profound. "I see, my child," resumed Rodolphe, hardly containing his joy, "that in your heart I have almost taken the place of your father." "It is not my fault, Rodolphe. It is, perhaps, wrong in me; but, as I have told you, I know you, and I do not know my father; and," added she, holding down her head in confusion, "and then you know the past, Rodolphe, and yet you have overwhelmed with me favours; but my father does not know it. Perhaps he will regret having found me," added the unfortunate child, shuddering; "and since he is, as madame said, of high birth, doubtless he will be ashamed —he will blush for me." "Blush for you!" cried Rodolphe, drawing himself up proudly. "Re-assure yourself, poor child; your father will place you in a position so brilliant, so lofty, that the greatest among the great of this world will regard you

henceforth, with the utmost respect. Blush for you! no, no; you will rank with the noblest princesses of Europe." "My lord!" cried Murphy and Clemence at the same time, alarmed at the vehemence of Rodolphe and the increasing pallor of Fleur de Marie, who looked at her father with surprise. "Blush for you!" continued he; "oh, if I ever rejoiced and felt pride in my sovereign rank, it is that, thanks to this rank, I can elevate you as much as you have heretofore been abased. Do you hear, my darling child, my beloved daughter? for it is I, it is I who am your father." "And the prince, no longer able to conquer his emotion, threw himself at the feet of Fleur de Marie, whom he covered with tears and caresses. "God be praised!" cried Fleur de Marie, clasping her hands. "I am permitted to love my benefactor as much as I would have loved him. He is my father. I can cherish him without remorse. Be praised, my—" She could not finish, the blow was too violent; Fleur de Marie fainted in the arms of her father. Murphy ran to the door, opened it, and said, "Call Doctor David, instantly, for his royal highness; some one is sick." "Curses on my head! I have killed her," cried Rodolphe, in tears, kneeling before his daughter. "Marie my child, listen to me; it is your father. Pardon, oh, pardon, for not having retained this secret longer. I have killed her." "Calm yourself, my lord," said Clemence; "there is, doubtless, no danger. See, her cheeks are tinged with colour; it is the shock—only the shock." "But hardly convalescent, she will die. Woe is me." At this moment, David, the black physician, entered precipitately, holding in his hands a small box filled with vials, and a paper, which he handed to Murphy. "David, my child is dying. I have saved your life—you must save that of my child," cried Rodolphe.

Although amazed at these words of the prince, who spoke of his child, the doctor ran to Fleur de Marie, whom Madame d'Harville held in her arms, took hold of the young girl's pulse, placed his hand on her forehead, and turning towards Rodolphe, who, pale and alarmed, awaited his doom, he said, "There is no danger, let your highness be assured." "You speak the truth—no danger—none?" "Not any, my lord. A few drops of ether, and this attack will pass over." "Oh, thank you, David, my good David!" cried the prince, warmly. Then, turning towards Clemence, Rodolphe added, "She lives; our daughter will live." Murphy had just cast his eyes over the note which David had

placed in his hand; he shuddered, and looked at the prince with affright. "Yes, my old friend," said Rodolphe, "in a short time my daughter will say to the marchionesss d'Harville, 'My mother!" "My lord," said Murphy, trembling, "the news yesterday was false." "What do you say?" "A violent attack, followed by a fainting fit, had caused them to think that the Countess Sarah was dead." "The Countess!" "This morning there are hopes of saving her." "Oh; my God; cried the prince, while Clemence looked at him with surprise, not comprehending his altered appearance.

"My lord;" said David, still occupied with Fleur de Marie, "there is no cause for the slightest uneasiness. But fresh air is necessary; the chair can be rolled on the terrace by opening the door of the garden; she will then soon recover." Murphy ran immediately to open the glass door, and, aided by David, he gently rolled the chair into the garden, leaving Rodolphe and Clemence alone.

CHAPTER X.

DEVOTION.

"Ah, Madame," cried Rodolphe, as soon Murphy and David had departed, "you do not know that the Countess Sarah is the mother of Fleur de Marie.'

"Gracious God!" "I thought her dead; and what you are still ignorant of," added Rodolphe, with bitterness, "is, that this woman, as selfish as ambitious, loving me only as a prince, had, in my younger days, contrived to lead me into a marriage, which was afterwards dissolved. Wishing then to marry again, the countess has caused all the misfortunes of her child by abandoning her to mercenary hands." "Ah! now, my lord, I understand the aversion that you had for her." "You comprehend also why she wished to win you by infamous anonymous communications! Always impelled by her implacable ambition, she thought to force me to return to her, by isolating me from all endearments." "Oh! what a wicked intention!" "And she is not dead!" "My God! this regret is not worthy of you." "It is because you are not aware of all the injury she has caused! At this time, when, on finding my daughter again, I was about to give her a mother worthy of her—oh! no, no—this woman is a demon of vengeance in my path!" "Come, my lord, take courage! said Clemence,

wiping away the tears which fell in spite of her; "you have a great and holy duty to fulfil. You said yourself, that henceforth the fate of your daughter should be as happy as it had been miserable; that she should be as elevated as she had been abased. For that, you must legitimatize her birth; for that, you must espouse the countess M'Gregor." "Never—never! It would be to reward perjury, selfishness, and the mad ambition of this unnatural mother. I will acknowledge my daughter; you will adopt her, and thus, as I hoped, she will find in you maternal affection."

"No, my lord, you will not do that; no, you will not leave the birth of your child in the shade. The Countess Sarah is of a noble and ancient house; for you, doubtless, this alliance is disproportionate, but it is honourable. By this marriage, your daughter will not be legitimatized, but legitimate; and thus whatever may happen to her, she can be proud of her father, and openly acknowledge her mother." "But to renounce you—my God! it would be impossible. Ah! you do not think what happiness it would have been for me, divided between you and my child—my only love in this world." "Your child remains to you, my lord: God has miraculously restored her to you. Not to be perfectly happy will be ingratitude!" "Ah! you do not love me as I love you." "Believe it, my lord, believe it; the sacrifice that you make to duty will seem to you less painful." "But if you love me—if your regrets are as bitter as mine, you will be very unhappy. What will remain for you?" "Charity, my lord; that admirable sentiment which you have awakened in my heart; that sentiment which has caused me to forget so many sorrows, and to which I am indebted for so many sweet and tender consolations." "Pray, listen to me. Be it so: I will marry this woman; but once the sacrifice accomplished, will it be possible for me to live with her who only inspires me with aversion and contempt? No, no; we shall remain for ever separated; never shall she see my child. Thus Fleur de Marie will lose in you the most tender of mothers." "But there will remain for her the most tender of fathers. By the marriage she will be the legitimate daughter of a sovereign prince of Europe; and thus, as you have said, her position will be as splendid as it was obscure."

"You are without pity. I am very unhappy!" "Dare you speak thus—you, so great, so just—you, who so nobly comprehend duty, devotion, and self-denial? A short time since, before this providential revelation, when you wept for your child with

such bitter tears, if any one had said to you, 'Make one wish—one alone, and it shall be realized,' you would have cried, 'My daughter—Oh! my daughter—let her live!' This is accomplished; your daughter is restored to you, and you call yourself unhappy. Ah, my lord, may Fleur de Marie not hear you!" "You are right," said Rodolphe, after a long silence; so much happiness would have been heaven upon earth; but I do not deserve that. I will do my duty. I do not regret my hesitation. I owe to it a new proof of the beauty and noble sentiments of your mind." "This mind—it is you who have exalted and elevated it. If that which I do is well, it is you whom I praise for it. Courage, my lord, as soon as Fleur de Marie can stand the fatigue of travelling, take her with you. Once in Germany, in that country, so calm and grave, her transformation will be complete, and the past will only be to her a sad and distant dream." "But you? but you?" "I—I can well tell you that now, because I shall always say it with joy and pride: my love for you shall be my guardian angel, my saviour, my virtue, my felicity. Every day I will write you: pardon me this demand—it is the only one I shall make. You, my lord, will reply to me sometimes, to give me news of her, who for a moment at least, I called my daughter?" said Clemence, without being able to restrain her tears; and who shall always be so, at least in my thoughts; in fine, when time shall have given us the right openly to avow the unalterable affection which binds us—eh! I swear it in the name of your daughter, if you desire it, I will go to live in Germany—in the same city with you—never more to part; and thus terminate a life which might have been more happy, but which will have been, at least worthy and honourable."

"My lord!" cried Murphy, entering precipitately, "she whom God has restored to you has recovered her senses. Her first words were, 'My father!' She asks to see you." * *

A few moments after, Madame d'Harville left the hotel of the prince. He, accompanied by Murphy, the Baron de Graün, and an aid-de-camp, went in great haste to the residence of the Countess M'Gregor.

CHAPTER XI.

THE MARRIAGE.

Since Rodolphe had informed her of the murder of Fleur de Marie, Sarah M'Gregor, overwhelmed by this revelation, which ruined all her hopes, tortured by deep remorse, had been attacked by violent nervous spasms and a frightful delirium; her wound, hardly healed, re-opened, and a fainting fit of long duration had caused her attendants to suppose her dead. However, from the strength of her constitution, she did not sink under this severe attack; a new glimmering of life once more re-animated her.

Seated in an arm-chair, in order to relieve the oppression which suffocated her, Sarah, almost regretting the death from which she had just escaped, was occupied with bitter thoughts. Suddenly Thomas Seyton entered her chamber; he with difficulty, restrained some internal agitation; at a sign from him, her two women withdrew. "How are you now?" said he to his sister. "In the same state; I am very weak, and from time to time almost suffocated. Why did not God take me away from this world during my last attack?" "Sarah," said Thomas Seyton, after a pause, "you are between life and death; a violent emotion might kill you, as it might save you." "I have now no more emotions to experience, my brother." "Perhaps—" "The death of Rodolphe would find me indifferent; the ghost of my drowned daughter; drowned by my fault; is there, always there, before me. It is not emotion; it is incessant remorse. I am really a mother now, since I no longer have a child." "I would prefer to find in you that cold ambition, which made you regard your daughter as a means to realize the dream of your life." "The frightful reproaches of the prince have killed this ambition; the maternal sentiment is awakened in me at the picture of the extreme misery of my daughter." "And," said Seyton, hesitating, and weighing each word, "if by chance; supposing an impossible thing; a miracle; you were informed that your daughter still lived; how would you support such a discovery?" "I should die with shame and despair at the sight of her." "Do not believe that, you would be to much elated with the triumph of your ambition; for if your daughter had lived, the prince would have married you, he told you so." "In admitting this mad supposition, it seems to me that I should not have a right to live. After having received the hand of the prince, my duty would be to de-

liver him of an unworthy wife, my daughter of an unnatural mother." The embarrassment of Thomas Seyton increased every moment. Charged by Rodolphe, who was in an adjoining room, to inform Sarah that Fleur de Marie was alive, he did not know how to accomplish it. The state of the countess was so critical that she might expire from one moment to another: there was, then, no time to be lost in celebrating the marriage, which was to legitimatize the birth of Fleur de Marie. For this sad ceremony, the prince had brought with him a clergyman, with Murphy and the Baron de Graün, as witnesses; the Duke de Lucenay and Lord Douglas, notified in haste by Seyton, were to serve as witnesses for the countess, and had just arrived. Time was pressing; but remorse, feelings of maternal tenderness, which replaced, in Sarah's heart, her merciless ambition, rendered the task of Seyton still more difficult. All his hope was that his sister deceived him or deceived herself, and that her pride would be awakened, as soon as she had gained this crown, so long and ambitiously coveted. "My sister," said Thomas Seyton, "I am in a terrible perplexity; one word from me, perhaps, will restore you to life; perhaps will send you to your tomb." "I have already told you that I have no more emotions to dread." "One alone, however—" "Which?" "If it concerned your child?" "My child is dead." "If she were not?" "We have exhausted this supposition already. Enough, my brother; my remorse suffices." "But if it were not a supposition? if by chance; an incredible chance; your daughter had been rescued from death; if she lived?" "You alarm me; do not talk thus." "Well? then, may God pardon me and judge you; she lives still." "My daughter?" "She lives, I tell you. The prince is here with a clergyman. I have sent for two of your friends for witnesses; the wish of your life is at length realized; the prediction is fulfilled; you are a sovereign." Thomas Seyton pronounced these words, fixing on his sister a look of anguish, watching for each sign of emotion. To his great astonishment, the features of Sarah remained almost impassible: she placed her hand upon her heart, and falling back in her chair, suppressed a slight cry, which appeared to have been caused by some sudden and excruciating pain; after which her face became composed and calm. "What is the matter, my sister?" "Nothing, surprise, unhoped for joy. At length my wishes are crowned." "I was not deceived," thought Thomas Seyton. "Ambition rules; she is saved." Then addressing his

sister, he said, "Eh well! what did I tell you?" "You were right," replied she, with a bitter smile, divining her brother's thoughts; "Ambition has once more stifled maternity within me!" "You will live! and you will love your daughter." "I do not doubt it, I shall live, see how calm I am. Where is the prince?" "He is here." "I wish to see him before the ceremony. My daughter, she is there, also, without doubt?" "No: you will see her afterward." "Now that I have time, ask, I pray you, the prince to come."

"My sister, I do not know, but your manner is strange." "Would you have me laugh? Do you think satisfied ambition has a soft and tender expression? Let the prince come!" In spite of himself, Seyton was uneasy at Sarah's calmness. For a moment he thought he saw in her eyes restrained tears; after a little longer hesitation, he opened a door, which he left open, and went out "Now," said Sarah, "let me but see and embrace my child, I shall be satisfied. It will be very difficult to be obtained; Rodolphe, to punish me, will refuse; but I will succeed." Rodolphe entered, and closed the door. "Your brother has told you all?" demanded the prince, coldly. "All." "Your ambition is satisfied?" "It is satisfied." "The clergyman and the witnesses are here." "I know it. One word, my lord." "Speak, madame." "I wish to see my daughter." "It is impossible." "I tell you, my lord that I wish to see my child." "She is hardly convalescent she has been quite ill this morning; this interview might be fatal to her." "But, at least she will embrace her mother." "For what purpose? You are now a sovereign." "I am not yet and I will not be until I have embraced my child. Rodolphe looked at the countess with profound astonishment. "How!" cried he, "you subject the satisfaction of your pride—" "To the satisfaction of my paternal tenderness: that surprises you." "Alas, yes." "Shall I see my child?" "But—" "Take care my lord. my moments are perhaps counted. As my brother said, this crisis may save—may kill me. At this moment, I collect all my strength all my energy, and I need them much to struggle against the shock of such a discovery. I wish to see my child, or I refuse your hand; and if I die, her birth is not legitimate." "Fleur de Marie is not here; I should have to send for her to my house." "Send for her at once, and I consent to all. As my moments, perhaps, are counted, I have said it. The marriage can take place while some one goes for Fleur de Marie." "Although this feel-

ing astonishes me, it is too praiseworthy to be disregarded. You shall see Fleur de Marie; I will write to her." "There, on the desk where I was wounded." While Rodolphe hastily wrote a few lines, the countess wiped away the icy sweat which stood upon her brow; her features now betrayed violent and concealed suffering. His note being written, Rodolphe arose and said, "I will send this to my daughter by one of my aides-de-camp. She will be here in half an hour. Shall I bring with me on my return the clergyman and witnesses?" "You can, or, rather, I beg you will do so. Ring, do not leave me alone." Rodolphe rang the bell, and requested the maid, who answered the summons, to desire Sir Walter Murphy to come to him. "This union is sad, Rodolphe," said the countess bitterly—"sad for me. For you it will be happy, for I shall not survive it." At this moment Murphy entered. "My friend," said Rodolphe, "send this letter immediately by the colonel; he will bring my daughter back with him, in the carriage. Beg the clergyman and witnesses to walk into the next room." "O God!" cried Sarah, in a supplicating tone, when the squire had departed, "grant me strength enough to see her—let me not die before she arrives." "Ah! why have you not always been as good a mother!" "Thanks to you, at least, I know repentance devotion, self-denial. Yes, just now, when my brother said our child lived, let me say our child; I felt that I was stricken unto death. I did not tell him, but I was happy. The birth of our child would be legitimatised, and I should die afterward."

"Do not speak thus." "Ah! this time I do not deceive you—you will see. "And no vestige remains of that implacable ambition which has ruined you! Why has fate willed that your repentance should be so late?"

"It is late, but profound, sincere; I swear it to you. At this solemn moment, if I thank God to take me from the world, it is because my life has been to you a horrible burden." "Sarah, in mercy—" "Rodolphe, a last prayer—your hand." The prince, turning away his eyes, gave his hand to the countess, who placed it between her own. "Ah! your hands are icy cold," cried Rodolphe, with affright. "Yes, I am dying. Perhaps, for a last punishment, God does not will that, I should embrace my child!" "Oh! yes, yes, he will be touched with your remorse." "And you, my friend, are you touched? do you pardon me? Oh! in mercy say it. Directly, when our child shall be here, if she comes in time, you cannot pardon me before her; that would be

to teach her how guilty I have been, and that you would not like. When I am once dead, what matters it to you if she love me?" "Be comforted: she shall know nothing." "Rodolphe, pardon! oh, pardon! Will you be without pity? Am I not sufficiently unhappy?" "Well, may God pardon the evil you have done to your child, as I pardon what you have done to me, unhappy woman." "You pardon me—from the bottom of your heart?" "From the bottom of my heart," replied the prince. The countess pressed the hand of Rodolphe to her dying lips in an ecstasy of joy and gratitude, and said, "Let the clergyman come in, my friend, and tell him that afterward he must stay. I feel myself very weak." This scene was heart-rending; Rodolphe opened the folding doors, and the clergyman entered, followed by the witnesses. All the actors in this sad scene were grave and sad; M. de Lucenay himself had forgotten his habitual frivolity. The contract of marriage between the most illustrious and very puissant prince, His Royal Highness, Gustavus Rodolphus V., reigning Grand-duke of Gerolstein, and Sarah Seyton, of Halsburg, Countess M'Gregor, had been prepared by the care of the Baron de Graün; it was read by him, and duly signed by all. Notwithstanding the repentance of the countess, when the clergyman said, with a solemn voice, to Rodolphe, "Does your royal highness consent to take for wife Madame Sarah Seyton of Halsburg, Countess M'Gregor?" and the prince had answered "YES!" with a loud and firm voice, the death-like countenance of the countess brightened: a rapid and transitory expression of triumphant pride passed over her livid features; it was the last flash of the ambition which died with her. During this sad and imposing ceremony, not a word was uttered by the witnesses. When it was finished, they all came forward, profoundly saluted the prince, and retired. "My brother," said Sarah, in a low tone, "beg the clergyman to have the goodness to wait a moment in the adjoining room." "How do you feel now, my sister? you are very pale." "I am sure to live now—am I not the Grand-duchess of Gerolstein?" added she, with a bitter smile. Remaining alone with Rodolphe, Sarah murmured, in an exhausted voice, while her features changed in an alarming manner. "My strength is gone. I feel that I am dying—I shall never see her." "Yes, yes, calm yourself Sarah—you will soon see her." "I have no more hope, this delay—oh! it needs a strength superhuman. My sight fails already." "Sarah!" said the prince, approaching the

countess, and taking her hands within his own, "she will come—now she cannot delay." "God has not willed this last consolation." "Sarah, listen, listen. I hear a carriage, yes, it is she; here is your child!" "Rodolphe, you will not tell her that I was a bad mother," articulated the countess slowly. The noise of a carriage resounded on the pavement of the court. The countess could not hear it. Her words were more and more incoherent. Rodolphe leaned over her with anxiety; he saw her eyes covered with a film. "Pardon—my child—see my child—pardon—at least—after my death—the honours—of—my—rank—" These were her last intelligible words. The fixed, predominating thought of her whole life returned again, notwithstanding her sincere repentance.

At this moment Murphy entered the room. "My lord, the Princess Marie—" "No," cried Rodolphe, quickly, "let her not enter. Tell Seyton to bring the clergyman." Then pointing to Sarah, who was gradually expiring, Rodolphe added, "God refuses her the supreme consolation of embracing her child."

Half an hour afterward, the Countess Sarah M'Gregor had ceased to exist.

CHAPTER XII.

BICETRE.

Fifteen days had passed since Rodolphe, by marrying the Countess, had legitimatised the birth of Fleur de Marie.

It was the middle of Lent. This date being established, we will conduct the reader to Bicetre. This immense establishment, founded, as every one knows, for the treatment of the insane, serves also as a place of refuge for seven or eight hundred poor old men, who are admitted when they have reached the age of seventy, or are afflicted with any very serious infirmity. On arriving at Bicetre, the visitor enters at first a vast court, planted with large trees and divided into grass-plots, ornamented in summer with flower borders. Nothing could be more cheerful, more peaceful, or more salubrious, than this promenade, which was specially designed for the indigent old men of whom we have spoken. It surrounds the buildings, in which, on the first floor, are found spacious sleeping apartments; and on the ground floor, dining halls, kept in admirable order, where the pensioners of Bicetre partake, in common, most excellent food, prepared with great care, thanks to the paternal solicitude of the directors of this establishment. To enume-

rate completely the different purposes for which this institution is designed, at the time of which we speak, the condemned prisoners were brought here after their sentence. It was, then, in one of the cells of this house, that the widow Martial, and her daughter Calebasse, awaited the moment of their execution, which was fixed for the next day. Nicolas, the Skeleton, and several other scoundrels, had succeeded in making their escape from La Force. Eleven o'clock had just struck, when two carriages stopped before the outer gate: from the first descended Madame Georges, Germain, and Rigolette; from the second, Louise Morel and her mother. Germain and Rigolette had been married fifteen days before. We will leave the reader to imagine the saucy gaiety, the lively happiness, which shone in the blooming visage of the grisette, whose rosy lips were only opened to smile or embrace Madame Georges, whom she called her mother.

The features of Germain expressed a felicity more calm, more reflecting, more grave: there was mingled with it a feeling of profound gratitude, almost of respect, towards this noble and excellent girl, who had offered him in prison consolations so sustaining and delightful, which Rigolette did not seem to recollect the least in the world; thus, as soon as her Germain turned the conversation on this subject, she spoke of something else, saying these recollections make her sad. Although she had become Madame Germain, and Rodolphe had settled on her forty thousand francs, Rigolette had not been willing (and her husband was of the same opinion) to change her grisette cap for a hat. Certainly, never had humility served better an innocent coquetry: for nothing could be more becoming more elegant than her little peasant's cap, ornamented on each side with rosettes of orange colour which contrasted well with her shining black hair, now worn in long ringlets; around her charming neck she wore a richly embroidered collar, and a scarf of French cashmere of the same shade as the ribbons of her cap which half concealed her fine person; and although she wore no corset, according to her usual custom her robe of taffeta showed not the slightest wrinkle on her slender figure. Madame Georges contemplated her son and Rigolette with quiet happiness. Louise Morel, after a rigid examination and autopsy of her child, had been set at liberty; the beautiful features of the daughter of the lapidary expressed a kind of sad and melancholy resignation. Thanks to the generosity of Rodolphe, and the care and attention which he had caused to be

shown her, the mother of Louise Morel, who accompanied her, had recovered her health.

The porter at the gate having asked Madame Georges whom she desired to see; she replied that one of the physicians of the asylum had made an appointment with her and her friends at eleven o'clock. Madame Georges had the option either to wait for the doctor in an office which was pointed out to her, or in the court. She chose the latter; leaning on the arm of her son, and continuing to converse with the wife of the lapidary, she walked in the garden, Louise and Rigolette following at a short distance.

"How happy I am to see you, dear Louise!" said the Grisette, "for the first time since—" "Since you came to see me in prison. Ah! Mademoiselle Rigolette," cried Louise, "what a kind heart! what—" "In the first place, my good Louise," said the Grisette, interrupting the daughter of the lapidary, "I am no more Mademoiselle Rigolette, but Madame Germain. "Yes, I knew you were married. But let me thank you again—" "That of which you are most completely ignorant, my good Louise," replied Madame Germain, "is, that I am married, thanks to him who has been our providence—" "Mr. Rodolphe! Oh! we bless him every day. When I came out of prison, the lawyer whom he sent to me told me that Ferrand," and the poor creature shuddered, "to make amends for his cruelties, had settled some money on my father and me—my poor father, who will return with us to-day to Paris, if the hopes of the worthy doctor are realized. May God grant it!" "He will grant it. Your father is so good and honest. The doctor thinks that the unexpected presence of several persons whom your father was accustomed to see before he lost his reason, may effect a cure. As for me, in my poor judgment, it appears certain." "I dare hardly believe it, mademoiselle," "Madame Germain, if it is all the same to you, my good Louise. But to return to what I was speaking about: you do not know who Mr. Rodolphe is?" "He is the providence of the unfortunate." "It is true; and what then?" Then addressing her husband, who was walking near her, Rigolette cried, "Don't walk so fast my dear, you fatigue our good mother; and, besides, I prefer to have you nearer to me." Germain turned round, lessening his pace a little, and smiled on Rigolette, who playfully threw him a kiss. "How genteel he is, my little Germain; is he not, Louise? With that air so distinguished; and such a fine figure! was I not right when I found him more to my

liking than Girandeau, the travelling clerk, or Cabrion? Ah! speaking of Cabrion—Pipelet and his wife, where are they, then? The doctor said they ought to come also, because your father often pronounces their names." "They will not long delay. When I left the house, they had been gone a long time." "Oh! then they will not fail to be here; for Pipelet is as punctual as a clock. Only think, Louise, it was Rodolphe who sent me with the order for Germain's release. You can imagine our joy on leaving that dreadful prison. We reached my room, and there, aided by Germain, I arranged a slight repast. It is true, it was of no great use to us, for when we had finished, we had neither of us eaten any thing; we were too happy. At eleven o'clock Germain went away; we agreed to meet the next morning. At five o'clock I was up and at work. At eight o'clock some one knocked; I opened; who should come in but Mr. Rodolphe. At once I began to thank him for what he had done for Germain; 'My neighbour;' said he to me, 'Germain will soon be here; give him this letter. You and he will take a hack, and go at once to a little village called Bouqueval, near Ecouen, on the Saint Denis road. Once there, you will ask for Madame Georges; and I wish you much pleasure.' He went, and Germain arrived. I told him what had occurred; Mr. Rodolphe could not deceive us; we got into a carriage, as frolicksome as children—we, who were so sad the day previous. Well! we arrived. Ah! my good Louise—hold! in spite of myself the tears will come to my eyes. This Madame Georges, whom you see before us, is the mother of Germain." "His mother?" "My God! yes, his mother, from whom her child had been carried off when quite young, and whom she had no hope of ever seeing again. You can imagine their happiness. After Madame Georges had wept much, and embraced her son, it was my turn. Mr. Rodolphe had written many fine things about me, for she told me, as she held me in her arms, that she knew of my conduct towards her son. 'And if you wish, my mother,' said Germain, 'Rigolette shall be your daughter also.' 'If I wish it, my children? with all my heart. I know you will never find a better or a nicer little wife.' Our marriage was fixed for two weeks ago yesterday. Two days previous, who should arrive in a fine carriage but a large, fat, bald gentleman, who brought me from Mr. Rodolphe a marriage present. Just imagine, Louise, a large box of rose-wood, with these words written in gold on a plate of blue enamel: 'Industry and Virtue, Love and Happiness.' I opened the box

what did I find? some small lace caps like the one I have on, dress patterns, jewels, gloves, this scarf, a beautiful shawl, in fine, it was like a real fairy tale."

"It is true: but, do you see, to have been so good so industrious has brought you all this happiness." "As to being good and industrious, my dear Louise, I have not been so purposely; it has so happened. But this is not all: at the bottom of the box I discovered a handsome portfolio, with these words, 'The neighbour to his neighbour.' I opened it: there were two packages, one for Germain, the other for me; in Germain's I found a paper, which named him director of a Bank for the Poor, with a salary of 4000 francs; in the envelope, directed to me, there was a draught for 40,000 francs on the treasury; this was my marriage portion. I wished to refuse it; but Madame Georges, who had talked with the tall, bald gentleman, and with Germain, said to me, 'My child, you can, you ought to accept it; it is the recompense of your virtue, your industry, and of your devotion to those who suffer."

"Oh! that is very true," cried Louise; "there is no one else like you, at least, Madame Germain." "Very good; I told the bald gentleman that what I had done was my pleasure; he answered, 'No matter; Mr. Rodolphe is immensely rich; your marriage portion on his part is a testimony of esteem and friendship.' 'Doubtless he is very rich, but if that were all—' Ah! my good Louise, if you only knew who Mr. Rodolphe is! and I made him carry my bundles! But patience, you shall see. The evening before the marriage, very late, the bald gentleman arrived, having travelled post. Mr Rodolphe could not come; but the tall gentleman came in his place. It was only then, my good Louise, that we were informed that your benefactor, that ours, was—guess what? a prince! Hein! poor Louise! And I had asked him to help me to wax my floor." "A prince, almost a king! That is the reason he has so much power to do good." "You comprehend my embarrassment, my good Louise. Thus, seeing that he was almost a king, I did not dare refuse my marriage portion. We were married. Eight days afterwards Mr. Rodolphe sent word to us and Madame Georges, that he would be very happy if we would make him a bridal visit; we went. Dame! you comprehend, my heart beat fast; we arrived at the Rue Plumet; we entered a palace; we passed through saloons filled with servants in livery. At length we found the bald gentleman in a saloon with some others, all laced over with embroidery; he introduced us into a

large room, where we found Mr. Rodolphe, that is to say, the prince, dressed very plainly, and looking so kind, so frank, so little proud, that I felt myself at once at my ease."

"You were no longer afraid? Oh! as for me, how I should have trembled."

"Eh! well. After having received Madame Georges with great kindness, and offered his hand to Germain, the prince said to me, smiling, 'Well, my neighbour, how are *Papa Cretu* and *Ramonette?*' (these are the names of my birds; how kind in him to remember them). 'I am sure,' he added, 'that now you and Germain rival with your joyous songs those of your little birds?' 'Yes, my lord,' our happiness is great, and it seems to us more sweet because we owe it to you.' 'It is not to me you owe it, my child, but to your excellent qualities and to those of Germain,' and so forth: I pass over the rest of his compliments. Finally, we left this good nobleman with our hearts rather full, for we shall see him no more. He told us that he would return to Germany in a few days; perhaps he has already gone, but gone or not, we shall always remember him." "Since he has subjects, they must be very happy!" "Judge; he has done so much good to us. I forgot to tell you it was at this farm that one of my old prison companions resided, a very good girl, who, to her happiness had also met Mr. Rodolphe; but Madame Georges had recommended me not to speak about it to the prince; I do not know wherefore. It appears, however, this dear Goualeuse has found her parents, who have taken her with them. I regret not having embraced her before her departure." "So much the better," said Louise, bitterly; "she is happy also; she—" "My good Louise, pardon me; I only speak to you of happiness, and you have yet so many reasons for sorrow." "If my child had lived," said Louise, sadly, "that would have consoled me; for now, where is the virtuous man who would have me, although I have money?" "On the contrary, Louise, I say, that none but a virtuous man can comprehend your position." "Well, true or not, that does me good, and I thank you. But who comes here? Hold! it is Pipelet and his wife. O how pleased he is! he who formerly was always so miserable on account of the jokes of Cabrion."

Pipelet and his wife came forward joyfully; Alfred had on a magnificent coat of grass green, his cravat just allowed room for a formidable shirt collar, a large yellow waistcoat with brown

stripes; black pantaloons, rather short; white stockings, and well-brushed shoes, completed his attire.

Anastasia strutted in a robe of amaranth-coloured merino, and a shawl of deep blue. She proudly displayed to all eyes her periwig, freshly curled, and her cap suspended from her arm by strings of green riband. The physiognomy of Alfred, ordinarily so grave, was sparkling; as soon as he saw Louise and Rigolette at a distance, he ran towards them, crying in his bass voice :—"Delivered; gone!" "Ah! Pipelet," said Rigolette, "how very gay you look; what is the matter?" "Gone, mademoiselle, or, rather, madame, I ought to say, for now you are exactly like Anastasia, just as your husband, is exactly like me." "You are very kind, Pipelet," said Rigolete, smiling; "but who has gone, then?" "Cabrion!!!" cried Pipelet, respiring with satisfaction, as if he had been relieved from an enormous weight. "He leaves France for ever, for perpetuity." "Your are very sure of it?" "I have seen him get into a diligence for Strasbourg, and all his effects—that is to say, a hat-box, a maul-stick, and a box of colours." "What is he singing about there, the old darling?" said Anastasia, arriving, out of breath. "I bet he is talking to you of Cabrion! he has done nothing but repeat the name all along the way." "That is to say, Anastasia, that I could hardly keep on the ground. Before, it seemed to me that my hat was lined with lead; now, one would say that the air raised me towards the firmament; gone—at last! and he will never return more." "Most happily—the rogue." "Anastasia, spare the absent; I will simply say that he was an unworthy fellow." "And how did you know that he had gone to Germany?" asked Rigolette. "By a friend of my lodgers. Apropos of this dear man, you do not know, that Alfred is appointed porter to a Bank for the Poor." "That happens very well," said Rigolette: "it is my husband who is the director of this bank, for which he is also indebted to the recommendation of Mr. Rodolphe." "And," cried Madame Pipelet, gaily, "so much the better. But to return to Cabrion: just imagine that a tall, fat, bald gentleman, on coming to inform us of Alfred's appointment, asked us if a painter, named Cabrion, had not lived with us. At the name of Cabrion, there was my old darling lifting his boot in the air, and already half dead. Happily, the bald man added, 'This young painter is about to start for Germany, perhaps he may always remain there.' As a proof of what he said, the individual gave to

my old darling the date of the intended departure of Cabrion, and the address of the '*Messageries ;*' and I had the unhoped-for happiness to read on the register, '*Cabrion, artist painter, leaves for Strasbourg and outward in conformity.*' The departure was fixed for this morning."

"I went to the office with my wife." "We saw the rogue mount on the imperial, and just at the moment the diligence started, Çabrion perceived me, turned round, and cried, '*I go for ever—yours for life !*' Happily, the trumpet of the conductor almost drowned these last words, which I despise ; but, at last, God be praised, he is gone." "And gone for ever, believe it, Pipelet," said Rigolette. "But what you do not know, and what will astonish you very much, is, that Mr. Rodolphe was—" "Well ?" "A prince in disguise—a royal highness !" "Come, get along—what a farce !" said Anastasia. "I swear it to you by my husband," said Rigolette, very seriously. "My prince of lodgers a royal highness ?" cried Anastasia. "And I asked him to take care of my lodge. Pardon, pardon." And she mechanically put on her cap, as if this head-dress were more suitable when she was speaking of a prince.

Alfred, contrary to his habit, uncovered his head entirely, and, saluted the air profoundly, crying, "A prince ! a highness in our lodge ! And he has seen me between the sheets when I was in bed, in consequence of the indignities of Cabrion !" At this moment Madame Georges turned round and said. "My children, here is the doctor."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE MAITRE D'ECOLE.

Doctor Herbin, a man of ripe age, had a physiognomy very intellectual and distinguished, of remarkable sagacity and depth of thought, and a smile of extreme goodness. His harmonious voice became full of kindness when he spoke to the lunatics ; thus the suavity of his tone seemed often to calm the irritability of these unfortunate people. He was among the first to substitute benevolent treatment, for the coercive means employed formerly ; no more chains, blows, or shower-baths ; above all no more solitary confinement. He comprehended that monomania, insanity and madness, were increased by confinement and abusive treatments ;

that on the contrary, by allowing the patients to live together, a thousand distractions, occurring at each moment, prevented them from being absorbed in a fixed idea. Thus experience proves that solitary confinement is as fatal to lunatics as it is salutary to criminals: the mental perturbation of the former increases in solitude, while moral corruption of the latter, is made incurable by the society of their brothers in crime. * * *

"Doctor," said Madame Georges, "I thought I might be allowed to accompany my son and daughter-in-law, although I do not know Mr. Morel. The situation of this excellent man appeared to me so interesting that I desire to assist with my children in attempting his complete restoration to reason, which, you hope will be accomplished by the means you are about using." "I count much, madame, on the favourable impression which the presence of persons to whom he has been accustomed, will produce upon him." "When they came to arrest my husband." said the wife of Morel, with emotion, showing Rigolette to the doctor, "our good little neighbour was occupied in assisting me and my children." "My father also well knew Mr. Germain, who has always been very kind to us," added Louise. Then noticing Alfred and Anastasia, she added, "they are the porters of our house; they have also assisted us much." "I thank you," said the doctor to Alfred, "for having inconvenienced yourself by coming here; but from what I have been told, it has not cost you a great deal." "Doctor," said M. Pipelet, with a grave inclination of the head, "man should assist man here below; he is a brother, for old Morel was the cream of honest men, before his arrest and that of his dear Louise." "And above all," said Anastasia, "I regret that the porringer full of scalding soup which I threw on the two bailiffs had not been melted lead." "It is true; and I ought to render this just homage to the affection which my wife has avowed to the Morels." "If you do not fear, madame," said Doctor Herbin, "the sight of the lunatics, we will pass through several courts to the exterior building, where I have had Morel conducted; for I have given orders this morning that he should not be led to the farm as usual." "To the farm?" said Madame Georges. "Does that surprise you, madame? Yes, we have here a farm cultivated by the lunatics, and its produce is very valuable." "Do they work there without restraint?" "Yes; and the labour, and the quiet fields, are among the best of our remedies, while their slight earnings serve to

meliorate their condition. But here we are at the door of one of the courts." Then seeing a shade of apprehension on the face of Madame Georges, the doctor added, "Fear nothing, madame; you will soon feel as secure as I do." "I follow you. Come, my children." "Anastasia," whispered Pipelet, "when I think that if the infernal conduct of Cabrion had lasted, your Alfred would have become mad, and, as such, would have been confined among these we are going to see, clothed in singular costumes, chained by the middle, or shut up in cages like wild beasts." "Do not speak of it, old darling! It is said that those who are mad for love are like real apes when they see a woman. Their keepers are obliged to soothe them with blows from a whip, and by letting immense quantities of water fall on their heads." "Anastasia, do not approach too near the cages of these madmen," said Alfred, gravely; "an accident happens so quickly!" "Yes, not to say how ungenerous it would be on my part to appear to defy them; for, after all, it is our attractions which make them distracted. Hold! I shudder, my Alfred, when I think that, had I refused you your happiness, you would now be crazy from love, like some of these madmen; that you would cling to the bars of your cage when you saw a woman, and roar afterward, poor old darling! you who, on the contrary, run away when they attempt to allure you." "My modesty is suspicious, it is true: but, Anastasia, the door opens—I shudder. We are going to see abominable figures, to hear the noise of chains and grinding of teeth."

The door of the court was opened. This court, forming a parallelogram, was planted with trees and furnished with benches; a gallery extended on each side: cells, well ventilated, opened on this gallery; some fifty men, uniformly clothed in grey, were walking, talking, or sitting silent in the sun. On the arrival of Doctor Herbin, a number of lunatics pressed round him, extending their hands to him with confidence and gratitude, to which he cordially replied, "Good-day, good-day, my children." Some of these unfortunate beings, too far from the doctor, for him to take their hands, offered it, with hesitation, to the persons who accompanied him. "Good-day, my friends," said Germain kindly, shaking hands in a manner which seemed to delight them. "Doctor," said Madame Georges, "are these the lunatics?" "About the most dangerous in the house," said the doctor, smiling. "We leave them together in the day-time, but at night

they are locked up in these cells." "How? these people are completely mad? But are they ever furious?" "At the commencement of their malady, but by degrees, the treatment begins to produce its effect, and the sight of their companions calms them; gentle usage appeases them, and their violent attacks, at first frequent, become more and more rare. Hold! here is one of the most violent." This was a powerful man of about forty years of age, with black hair, high forehead, sallow complexion, intellectual expression, and most intelligent countenance. He approached the doctor, and said to him, in a tone of exquisite politeness, although slightly constrained, "Doctor, I ought, in my turn, to have the right of conversing with the blind man; I have the honour of observing to you that there is flagrant injustice in depriving this unfortunate man of my conversation, to deliver him," (and the madman smiled with bitter disdain) "to the stupid incoherencies of an idiot, who is a stranger—completely a stranger to the least notion of any science whatever, while my conversation might divert the attention of the blind man. Thus," added he, with extreme volubility, "I would have told him my opinion on the isothermal and orthogonal superfices, causing him to observe that the equations of partial differences, of which the geometrical explanation is summed up in two orthogonal superficies, cannot generally be integral, on account of their complication. I should have proved to him that the united superficies are all necessary isothermal, and together we should have sought what superficies are capable of composing a treble isothermal system. Compare this recreation with the stupid nonsense with which they entertain this blind man," added the lunatic, taking breath, "and tell me, is it not a pity to deprive him of my conversation!" "Do not take what he has just said, madame, for the wanderings of a madman," whispered the doctor; "he sometimes handles in this way the most difficult questions, with an acuteness which would do honour to the most illustrious '*savans*.' His knowledge is great. He speaks all the living languages, but he is, alas! a martyr to his thirst for learning. He imagines that he has absorbed all human knowledge, and that, by retaining him here, humanity is thrown back into the darkness of ignorance."

The doctor replied aloud to the lunatic, who seemed to await his reply with respectful anxiety, "My dear Charles, your complaint appears to me very just, and this poor blind man, who, I

believe, is dumb, but, happily, is not deaf, will have great delight in the conversation of a man as learned as you are. I will see that you have justice done you." "Besides, by retaining me here, you deprive the universe of all human knowledge, which I have appropriated to myself by assimilation," said the madman, becoming animated by degrees, and commencing to gesticulate with great violence. "Come, calm yourself, my good Charles; the world has not yet discovered its deficiencies: as soon as it does so, we shall endeavour to supply its wants; and in that case, a man of your learning, can always render great services." "But I am for science what Noah's ark was for physical nature," cried he, grinding his teeth. "I know it, my dear friend." "You wish to put the light under the bushel!" cried he, clenching his fists. But then I will break you like glass," added he, with a threatening air, his face purple with anger, and the veins swelling. "Ah! Charles," answered the doctor, fixing on the madman a calm, steady look, and assuming a caressing and flattering manner, "I thought you were the greatest genius of modern times." "And past," cried the madman, forgetting all at once his anger in his pride. "You did not let me finish: that you were the greatest genius of time past and present—" "And future," added the madman, proudly. "Oh! the babbler, who always interrupts me," said the doctor, smiling, and striking him amicably upon the shoulder. "Can it be said that I am ignorant of all the admiration that you inspire and deserve! Come, let us go and see the blind man."

"Conduct me to him. Doctor, you are a good man; come, come, you will see what he is obliged to listen to," answered the lunatic, completely calmed, walking before the doctor with a satisfied air. "I confess to you," said Germain, who had drawn near to his wife, "I confess to you for a moment I feared a crisis." "Ah! formerly at the first word of excitement the keepers would have seized, tied, beat, and inundated him with a shower-bath, one of the most atrocious tortures ever invented. Judge of the effect of such a treatment on an energetic and irritable temperament. Then he would have fallen into one of those frightful fits of madness which defy the most powerful restraint; exasperated by their frequency, they became almost incurable; while, as you see by not restraining this momentary ebulition, or in turning it aside by the aid of excessive mobility of mind which is to be remarked among many lunatics, these bubblings are soon assuaged." "And who is this

blind man of whom he speaks?" asked Madame Georges." "This blind man" answered the doctor "was taken in a den in the Champs Elysées, where they arrested a band of assassins; he was found chained in a subterranean cavern, alongside of the corpse of a woman, horribly mutilated." "Ah! it is frightful," said Madame Georges, shuddering, (Rodolphe had always left Madame Georges in ignorance, of the fate of the Maitre d'Ecole.)

"This man is frightfully ugly; his face has been burned with vitriol. Since his arrival, he has not spoken a word. I do not know whether he is really dumb, or only affects it. The only attacks he has had, have occurred during my absence, and always at night. Unfortunately, all the questions put to him have been unanswered; and it is impossible to obtain any information as to his situation. The other lunatics pay him great attention; they guide his footsteps, and like to entertain him, alas! according to their degree of intelligence. Hold, here he is." All the persons who accompanied the doctor recoiled with horror at the Maitre d'Ecole for it was the brigand in reality. He was not mad, but he pretended to be both mad and dumb. He had massacred La Chouette, not in a fit of madness, but in an excess of burning fever, such as he had been attacked with at Bouqueval on the night of his horrible vision. After his arrest at the tavern of the Champs Elysées he had awoke from his delirium in a cell of the Conciergerie, where the insane are temporarily confined. Hearing every one say around him, 'he was a furious madman," he resolved to play this part, and pretended dumbness, lest by his answers they should doubt his insanity. This stratagem succeeded. Conducted to Bicetre, he pretended to have other attacks of madness, always taking care to choose the night for these manifestations, to escape the penetrating observation of the chief physician; the attending surgeon, awakened in haste, never arriving until the crisis was over, or nearly at an end. The very small number of the brigand's accomplices, who knew his real name and his escape from the galleys, were ignorant of what had become of him, and, besides, had no interest in denouncing him; He hoped, then, to remain always at Bicetre, by continuing his part of a madman and mute.

Such was then the only wish of this man, thanks to the inability to do harm which paralized his savage instincts. Thanks to the profound seclusion in which he had lived in the cellar of Bras-Rouge, remorse, had taken almost entire possession of his iron heart.

By concentrating his mind upon the recollection of his past crimes, deprived of all communication with the exterior world, his ideas assumed a sort of reality, as he had told La Chouette; then passed before him sometimes the features of his victims; but this was not madness—it was the power of memory. Thus this man, still in the prime of life, of a vigorous constitution, who, without doubt, would live many long years, was to pass these years among madmen, without ever exchanging a word with a human being. Otherwise if he were discovered, he would be led to the scaffold for his new murders, or be condemned to perpetual imprisonment among scoundrels, for whom he felt a horror augmented by his repentance. The brigand was seated on a bench; a forest of greyish hair, covered his hideous and enormous head; with his elbows on his knees, he supported his chin on his hand. Although deprived of sight, two holes replaced his eyes, his mouth was deformed, yet a withering despair was manifest on his horrid visage. A lunatic of a sad, benevolent, and juvenile appearance, knelt before him, held his large hands in his own, looked at him with kindness, and, with a sweet voice, constantly repeated, "Strawberries! strawberries!" "See, now," said the learned madman, gravely, "the sole conversation which this idiot can hold with the blind man. Yes, with him, the eyes of the body are closed, those of the mind are without doubt opened, and he will be pleased if I enter into communication with him." "I do not doubt it," said the doctor; while the poor lunatic with the melancholy face, still repeated, in his soft voice, "Strawberries! strawberries!" "Since his entrance here, this poor idiot has uttered no other words than these," said the doctor to Madame Georges, who looked at the brigand with horror. "Mother," said Germain to Madame Georges, "how this poor blind man seems depressed:" "It is true, my child," answered Madame Georges; "the sight of him sickens me. Oh! how sad it is to see humanity under this dreadful aspect!" Hardly had Madame Georges pronounced these words, than the brigand shuddered; his scarred face became paler; he turned his head so quickly towards the mother of Germain, that she could not refrain from a cry of horror." The brigand had recognised the voice of his wife, and the words of Madame Georges told him that she had spoken to his son. "What is the matter, my mother?" cried Germain. "Nothing, my child; but the movement of this man, has frightened me. Hold! pardon my weakness," added she, addressing the doctor, "I almost regret having yielded to my

curiosity in accompanying my son." "Oh! for once, my mother —there is nothing to regret." "Very sure am I that our good mother will never return here, nor we either, my little Germain," said Rigolette: "it is too affecting." "You are a little coward; is it not so, doctor?" said Germain, smiling; "is not my wife a little coward?" "I confess," answered the doctor, "that the sight of this unhappy man has made a strong impression upon me— I, who have seen so much distress." "Anastasia," said Pipelet, "I shall dream of that figure—I shall have the night-mare," "my friend," said the doctor to the brigand, "how do you find yourself?" The brigand remained mute. "Do you not hear me, then?" continued the doctor, striking him lightly on the shoulder. He made no reply, but bowed his head. At the end of some moments, from his sightless eyes there fell a tear. "He weeps," said the doctor. "Poor man!" added Germain, with compassion. The Brigand shuddered: he heard anew the compassionate voice of his son. "What is the matter? What afflicts you?" demanded the doctor. The brigand buried his face in his hands. "We shall obtain nothing," said the doctor. "Let me try to console him," replied the learned madman. Then addressing the young lunatic, who was still kneeling before the brigand, "Take yourself off there, with your strawberries." "My boy," said the doctor to the young man, "each must have his turn. Let your comrade take your place." The boy obeyed at once, arose, looked at the doctor timidly with his large blue eyes, showed his deference by a salute, made a sign of adieu to the brigand, and departed, repeating in a plaintive voice, "Strawberries! strawberries!" The doctor, perceiving the painful effect this scene had produced upon Madame Georges, said to her, "Happily, madame, we are going to find Morel; if my hopes are realized, your heart will expand with joy on seeing this excellent man restored to his wife and daughter." And the physician withdrew, followed by the friends of the artisan, Morel. The brigand remained alone with the learned madman, who commenced to explain to him, very learnedly, the imposing movement of the stars, which describe their immense revolutions silently in the heavens, of which the normal state is night. But the brigand did not listen. He thought, with profound despair, that he should never hear again the voices of his son and wife. Knowing the shame, the affright into which he would have plunged them by the revelation of his name, he would have endured a thousand deaths, rather than

have disclosed it. One consolation remained to him; for a moment he had inspired his son with pity. And in spite of himself, he recalled to mind the following words which Rodolphe had spoken to him before he inflicted this terrible chastisement. "Each of your words is an oath; each of your words shall be a prayer. You are audacious and cruel because you are strong; you shall be meek and humble, because you shall be weak. Your heart is closed to repentance; some day you will weep for your victims. From a man you have made yourself a savage beast; some day your understanding shall be restored by repentance. You have not even spared what the wild beasts spare, the female and her young. After a long life consecrated to the expiation of your crimes, your last prayer shall be to supplicate God to grant you the unhoped-for happiness of dying between your wife and your son." * * * *

"We are going to pass the court of the idiots, and then we shall reach the building where we shall find Morel," said the doctor, on leaving the court.

CHAPTER XIV.

MOREL THE LAPIDARY.

NOTWITHSTANDING the sadness with which the sight of the lunatics had inspired her, Madame Georges could not but stop for a moment before a railed court, where the incurable idiots were confined. Poor beings! who often have not even the instinct of the beast, and whose origin is unknown to all as well as to themselves. Thus they pass through life, strangers to the affections, experiencing only the most limited animal wants. Doctor Herbin had no occasion to direct the attention of Madame Georges to the savage brutishness, stupid insensibility, or imbecile amazement, which gave the wretches an expression at once hideous and painful to behold. Almost all were clothed in long dirty frocks, ragged and torn; for these beings, deprived of instinct and reason, cannot be prevented from tearing and soiling their vestments, rolling like beasts in the mire of the courts, where they remain during the day. * * * *

"Poor people!" said Madame Georges, following the doctor, "how sad it is to think there is no remedy for their woes." "Alas! none, madame; above all, for adults; for now, idiot children receive a kind of education which developes the least

atom of intelligence with which they are endowed. We have a school here, directed with perseverance and enlightened patience, which already offers the most satisfactory results; by a very ingenious method, the mental and physical capacities are exercised at the same time; and many have been taught the alphabet, figures, and to distinguish colours; they have also succeeded in teaching them to sing in chorus; and I assure you, madame, there is a strange, sad charm, in hearing these voices raised towards heaven in a chant, of which almost all the words are to them unknown. But here we are at the building, where we shall find Morel." "And what is his madness?" whispered Madame Georges to the doctor. "He imagines that if he does not earn thirteen hundred francs in his days work, to pay a debt contracted with a notary named Ferrand, Louise will die on the scaffold for the crime of infanticide." "Ah, this notary was a monster!" cried Madame Georges. "Louise Morel and her father are not his only victims; he has persecuted my son with undying animosity." "Louise Morel has told me all, madame," answered the doctor, "but, be pleased to wait for me a moment, with these good people! I am going to see how poor Morel is." Then addressing the daughter of the lapidary, "I beg you, Louise, at the moment I cry 'Come,' appear at once, but alone; when I say, a second time, 'Come,' the others will also enter." "Ah, my courage fails me," said Louise, drying her tears. "Poor father, if this trial should be useless!" "I hope it will save him; for a long time I have been preparing for it. Come, compose yourself, and remember my instructions." And the doctor, entered into a room of which the grated windows opened on a garden. Thanks to the comforts with which he was surrounded, the features of Morel were no longer pale, ghastly, and wrinkled; his full face, slightly coloured, announced the return of health; but a certain melancholy smile indicated that his reason was not yet completely re-established. When the doctor entered, Morel, seated at a table, imitated the exercise of his trade as a lapidary, saying, "Thirteen hundred francs, or Louise to the scaffold; thirteen hundred francs; let us work—work—work." This aberration, of which the attacks were becoming less frequent, had always been the symptom of his madness. The physician, at first vexed to find Morel under the influence of his monomania, soon hoped to make it serve his project; he took from his pocket a purse containing sixty-five

golden louis, poured the gold into his hand, and said suddenly to Morel, who had not perceived the arrival of the doctor, "My good Morel, you have worked enough; you have earned the thirteen hundred francs; here they are." And the doctor threw on the table his handful of gold. "Louise saved!" cried the lapidary, clutching the gold eagerly. "I will run to the notary;" and, rising precipitately, he rushed to the door. "Come," cried the doctor, with lively anxiety, for the instantaneous cure of the lapidary might depend upon this first impression. Hardly had he said 'Come,' than Louise appeared at the door, at the moment that her father reached it. Morel, stupified, recoiled, and the gold dropped which he held. For some moments he looked at Louise with profound amazement, not yet recognising her. He seemed, however, to collect his thoughts; then, approaching her by degrees, he looked at her with an uneasy and timid curiosity. Louise, trembling with emotion, with difficulty restrained her tears, while the doctor watched attentively the smallest movements of the lapidary's countenance. He, leaning towards his daughter, began to turn pale; passed both his hands over his forehead; then, taking a step towards her, he wished to speak, but his voice died upon his lips, his paleness increased, and he looked around him as if just awaking from a dream. "Well; well;" whispered the doctor to Louise, "it is a good sign; when I say 'Come,' throw yourself into his arms, calling him father." The lapidary placed his hands on his chest, looking at himself from head to foot, as if to convince himself of his identity, but instead of fixing his eyes on his daughter, he seemed as if he wished to hide himself from her sight. Then he said, in a low and broken voice, "No, no; a dream; where am I? impossible." Then, seeing the gold scattered on the floor, "And this gold; I do not remember; am I awake? My head turns; I dare not look; I am ashamed; it is not Louise." "Come," said the doctor, in a loud voice. "Father, recognise me, then; I am Louise, your daughter," cried she, bursting into tears, and throwing herself into his arms; at the same moment, the others entered the apartment. "Oh, my God!" said Morel, whom Louise loaded with caresses, "where am I? what do they want with me?" Then, after a pause, he took the head of Louise between his two hands, looked at her fixedly, and cried, "Louise!" "He is saved!" said the doctor. "My husband! my poor Morel!" cried the wife of the lapidary,

running to join Louise. "My wife!" said Morel; "my wife and child!" "And I, also, Morel," said Rigolette; "all your friends are collected around you." "All your friends! do you see, Morel?" added Germain. "And your old friends of the lodge, too," said Anastasia, approaching in her turn with Alfred; "here are the old Pipelets; friends till death; ah, Morel, here is a great day." "Pipelet and his wife! so many people around me! it seems to me so long since! And—but—in fine, it is Louise, is it not?" cried he, with emotion, pressing his daughter to his heart. "My poor father, yes; it is I; here is my mother; there are all your friends; you shall leave us no more; we shall be happy now." "Very happy. But wait till I recollect; all happy; it seems to me, however, that they came to conduct you to prison, Louise." "Yes, my father; but I have been acquitted; you see it; I am here; near to you." "Wait, still; wait; my memory returns." Then he said, with affright, "And the notary?" "Dead." "Dead! he? then I believe you; we can be happy; but where am I? how am I here? for how long a time? and why? I do not exactly recollect." "You have been so sick," said the doctor; "you have had a fever—very violent—delirium." "Yes, yes; I recollect; the last thing, before my illness; I was talking to my daughter, and who—who then? Ah, a very generous man, Mr. Rodolphe, he prevented my arrest. Since then I recollect nothing." "Your disease was attended by a loss of memory," said the doctor. "The sight of your friends has restored it to you." "And at whose house am I, then?" "A friend of Mr. Rodolphe's," Germain hastened to say; "the change of air, it was thought, would be useful to you." "Very well," whispered the doctor; and, addressing the superintendent, he added, "Order the hack round to the garden door, so that he need not pass through the courts." Thus, as often happens in cases of madness, Morel had no recollection of his former alienation of mind. Some moments afterward, leaning on his wife and daughter, and accompanied by a medical student, who was to accompany them to Paris, Morel got into the vehicle and left Bicetre, without suspecting that he had been confined there as a lunatic. * * * *

"You think this man cured?" said Madame Georges to the doctor, who was conducting her to the principal entrance of Bicetre. "I think so, madame, and I have expressly left him under the happy influence of this family meeting; I should have

feared to separate them. I shall see him every day until his cure is perfectly established; for, not only does he interest me very much, but he was particularly recommended to me by the charge d'affaires of the grand duchy of Gerolstein."

Germain and his mother exchanged glances. "I thank you," said Madame Georges, "for the kindness with which you allowed me to visit this fine establishment; and I congratulate myself at having witnessed a touching scene, which your knowledge and skill had foreseen and predicted." "And I, madame, doubly congratulate myself upon the success which has restored so excellent a man to his family. * * * *

Some moments afterward, Madame Georges, Rigolette, and Germain, left Bicetre, as well as Mr. Pipelet and his wife. Just as Dr. Herbin returned to the courts, he met an officer of the house, who said to him, "Ah, my dear doctor, what a scene have I just witnessed. For you it would have been an inexhaustible source of—" "How then? What scene?" "You know that we have here two women, a mother and daughter, who are to be executed to-morrow?" "Doubtless." "Eh, well; never in my life have I seen hardihood and unconcern like this mother's; she is an infernal woman." "Is it not the widow Martial, who showed so much assurance at her trial?" "The same." "And what has she done more?" "She demanded to be confined with her daughter until her execution. They granted her request. Her daughter, less hardened than she is, appears to be softened as the fatal moment approaches, while the diabolical assurance of the widow augments. Just now the almoner of the prison entered their cell to offer the consolations of religion. The daughter was about to accept them, when the mother, with her usual coolness, attacked both her and the almoner with such frightful remarks, that the venerable priest was obliged to leave the dungeon, after having, in vain, endeavoured to address some holy words to this unmanageable woman." "Upon the eve of mounting the scaffold! Such hardihood is truly infernal," said the doctor. "Would not one say that this family was pursued by a fatality? The father died upon the scaffold; one son is in the galleys; another, condemned to death, has lately escaped. The eldest son, and two younger children only, have escaped this frightful contagion. However, this woman has sent for the eldest son, the only honest man of this detestable race, to come to-mor-

row morning to receive her last wishes. What an interview!" "Are you not curious to be present?" "Frankly, no. You know my opinion on punishment by death, and I have no need of such a spectacle to confirm this opinion. If this horrible woman carries her assurance to the scaffold, what a sight for the people! what a deplorable example!" "This double execution is singular; the day has been fixed." "How?" "To-day is the middle of Lent." "Eh, well?" "To-morrow the execution takes place at seven o'clock. Now, the crowd of maskers, who will pass the night at the balls of the barriers, will necessarily meet the procession on their return to Paris; without speaking of the place of execution, the Barrier Saint Jacques, where will be heard, in the distance, the music of the surrounding taverns; to celebrate the last day of the carnival, they dance in these taverns until ten or eleven in the morning. * * *

The next morning the sun rose clear and glorious. At four o'clock, several piquets of infantry and cavalry surrounded the approaches to Bicetre.

CHAPTER XV.

THE TOILETTE.

A GLOOMY corridor, lighted at intervals by grated windows, or air-holes, leads to the condemned cell.

This dungeon received its only light from a large wicket in the door, which opened into the passage spoken of above. Within these damp and mouldy walls, were confined the widow Martial and her daughter Calebasse. The sharp face of the convict's widow, stood out in bold relief like a marble mask, from the obscurity of the dungeon.

Deprived of the use of her hands, for she wore the prison robe, (a kind of cassock of coarse grey stuff, laced behind, the sleeves of which were closed like bags), she asked that her cap might be taken off, complaining of great heat in the head. Her grey hair fell dishevelled upon her shoulders. Seated on the edge of the bed, her feet on the ground, she looked fixedly on her daughter Calebasse, who, half reclining, and dressed in a similar manner, had her back against the wall. Her head was hanging on her breast, her eyes fixed, her respiration broken. Save a slight con-

vulsive movement, which from time to time agitated her under jaw, her features appeared calm, but of livid paleness.

At the further end of the dungeon, near the door, a veteran with the riband of the Legion of Honour, with a rough and swarthy face, a bald head, and long grey moustaches, is seated on a chair.

"It is very cold here! and yet my eyes burn; and then I am thirsty, always thirsty," said Calebasse. "Some water, if you please?" The old soldier arose and took from a bench a tin pail of water, filled a tumbler, and gave her a drink. After having drunk greedily, she said, "Thank you." "Will you drink?" asked the soldier of the widow. She shook her head in the negative. "What is it o'clock?" said Calebasse. It will soon be half-past four." "In three hours!" resumed Calebasse, with a sardonic smile, "in three hours—" She dared not finish. The widow shrugged up her shoulders. Her daughter comprehended her thoughts and replied, "You have more courage than I, mother; you never falter; you—" "Never." "I know it well; I see it well. Your face is as tranquil as if you were seated by the fire of our kitchen, sewing. Ah! these good days are so far off, so far—" "Babbler!" "It is true: instead of resting there without saying anything, I would rather talk; I would rather—"

"Shake off your thoughts, coward!"

"Every one has not your courage, mother. I have done all I could to imitate you. I have not listened to the priest, because you did not wish it. And yet I may have been wrong, for," added the condemned girl, shuddering, "*after*—who knows? and *after*—will be very soon—it is—" "In three hours." "How coldly you say that mother. My God! and yet it is true, to say that we are here, both of us, that we are not sick, that we do not wish to die, and yet in three hours—" "In three hours you will have died like a true Martial. *You will have seen black*, that's all! be bold, my daughter." "It is not right for you to talk to your daughter in that way," said the old soldier, in a grave tone; "you had better have allowed her to speak with the priest." The widow shrugged up her shoulders with savage contempt, and, without turning her head, continued: "Courage, my daughter! we will show them that women have more firmness than these men, with their priests; the cowards!" "The commandant Leblond was the bravest of the first regiment of Chasseurs; I saw

him die at the breach of Saragossa, making the cross," said the veteran. "You were his chaplain, then?" demanded the widow, with a savage burst of laughter. "I was his soldier," answered the veteran, mildly. "It was only to let you know that one can pray without being a coward."

Calebasse looked attentively at this man with the bronzed visage, a perfect soldier of the Empire; a deep scar furrowed his left cheek. The simple words of this veteran, whose features, wounds, and red riband announced calm and tried bravery, profoundly struck the daughter. She had refused the consolation of the priest, more from shame and fear of her mother than from callousness. She compared the impious jesting of her mother with the piety of the soldier. Strong in this testimony; she could listen, without cowardice, to those religious instincts which even intrepid men had obeyed. "In truth," said she, with anguish, "why did I not hear the priest? there is no weakness in that. Besides it would keep off my thoughts; and then, at length, *after*, who knows?" "Again!" said the widow, in a tone of withering scorn. "Time is wanting; it is a pity; you would be religious. The arrival of your brother Martial will finish your conversion. But he will not come; the honest man, the good son." The door of the prison opened. "Already!" cried Calebasse, with a convulsive start. "Oh! my God; they have advanced the hour! they have deceived us." "So much the better; if the watch of the executioner is too fast; your follies will not dishonour me." "Madame," said the keeper of the prison with that kind of commiseration which *savours of death*, "your son is here; will you see him?" "Yes," answered the widow, without turning her head. "Enter, Sir," said the keeper. Martial entered. The veteran remained in the dungeon, the door of which was left open. Through the gloom of the corridor, half lighted by the increasing day and by a lamp, several soldiers were seen sitting and standing.

Martial was as pale as his mother; his countenance expressed deep and profound anguish, his knees trembled under him. In spite of the crimes of this woman, and the aversion she had always shown for him, he thought it a duty to obey her last wishes.

As soon as he entered, the widow cast on him a searching look, and said in a hollow and angry voice, as if to awaken in her son a feeling of revenge, "You see what they are going to do with your mother—with your sister!" "Ah! my

mother, it is frightful; but I told you of it, alas!—I told you."

The widow bit her lips with rage; her son did not comprehend her; she resumed.—"They are going to kill us, as they killed your father." "My God! and I can do nothing; it is finished. Now, what would you have me do? Why did you not listen to me; you and my sister? You would not have been here." "Ah! it is so," answered the widow, with her habitual and savage irony; "you find that well?" "My mother?" "Now you are satisfied; you can say, without a lie, that your mother is dead: you shall no longer blush for her." "If I were a bad son," answered Martial, quickly, shocked at the unjust harshness of his mother, "I should not be here." "You come from curiosity." "I come to obey you." "Ah! if I had listened to you, Martial, instead of listening to my mother, I should not be here." cried Calebasse, in a heart-rending voice, and yielding at length to her anguish and terror. "It is your fault if I curse you, my mother?" "She repents; she curses me; you must be delighted, then?" said the widow to her son, with a burst of diabolical laughter. Without replying to her, Martial approached Calebasse, and said to her, with compassion, "Poor sister! it is too late now." "Never too late to be a coward;" cried the mother, with fury. "Oh! what a race! what a race! Nicolas has escaped; happily, François and Amandine will escape you. They have already the seeds of vice: misery will cause them to grow." "Ah, Martial, watch well over them, or they will end like my mother and myself," cried Calebasse, uttering a hollow groan. "He will do well to watch over them," cried the widow, vehemently; "vice and misery will be stronger than he, and some day they will avenge father, mother, and sister." "Your horrible hope will not be realized, my mother," answered Martial, indignantly, "Neither they nor I shall ever more have misery to fear. La Louve saved the girl whom Nicolas wished to drown; the relations of this girl have proposed to give us money, or lands in Algiers. We have preferred the lands. To-morrow we shall leave with the children, and we shall never return." "Is what you say true?" asked the widow, in a tone of irritated surprise. "I never told a falsehood." "You do now, to make me mad." "Why? because the welfare of your children is secured?" "Yes; from the wolf's cubs you would make lambs. The blood of your father, your sister, mine, will not be avenged." "At

this moment, do not talk thus." "I have killed; they kill me. We are even." "My mother, repentance." The widow shouted with laughter. "Thirty years I have lived in crime, and to repent for thirty years they give me three days, and death at the end. Do you think I shall have time? No, no; when my head falls, it will gnash its teeth with rage and hatred." "My brother, help—take me hence: they are coming," murmured Calebasse, in a suffocating voice, for the poor creature began to be delirious. "Will you hush?" said the widow, exasperated by the weakness of Calebasse; "will you hush? Oh! the wretch! and she is my daughter!" "Mother! mother!" cried Martial, tortured by this horrible scene, "why did you send for me?" "Because I thought to give you a heart and revenge: but who has not the one, has not the other, coward!" "My mother!" "Coward! coward!" At this moment a noise of footsteps was heard in the corridor. The veteran looked at his watch and stood up. The rising sun, shed suddenly a golden beam of light through the grated window of the corridor opposite the door of the dungeon. This door was thrown open, and two keepers appeared, bringing two chairs; then the jailer came, and said to the widow, in an agitated voice, "Madame, it is time."

The widow stood up, impassible; Calebasse uttered piercing cries. Four men entered. Three of them, roughly clad, held in their hands small parcels of fine strong cord. The largest of these four men, dressed in black, wearing a round hat and a white cravat, handed a paper to the jailer. This man was the executioner. The paper was a receipt for two women fit to be guillotined. The executioner took possession of these two of God's creatures; from that time he was answerable. To the frightful despair of Calebasse had succeeded a helpless torpor. Two of the assistants were obliged to seat her on her bed, and to sustain her. Her jaws, clenched by convulsions, hardly allowed her to utter some unmeaning words; she rolled her dull and almost sightless eyes; her chin fell on her breast, and, without assistance her body would have fallen to the ground. Martial (after having for a long time embraced this unfortunate being,) as if fascinated by the scene, remained immovable. The brazen hardihood of the widow did not forsake her; with her head erect, she assisted to take off the dress which impeded her movements. "Where must I place myself?" she asked in a firm voice. "Have the kindness to seat yourself in one of these chairs," said the execu-

tioner. The widow walked with a firm and bold step to the place indicated, passing near her daughter, when she stopped, and said, in a voice slightly broken, "My daughter, embrace me!" At the voice of her mother, Calebasse was aroused from her apathy, drew up on her seat, and, with a gesture of malediction, cried, "If there is a hell, descend there, accursed!" "My child embrace me!" said the widow again, making a step towards her daughter. "Do not approach me! you have ruiued me!" murmured the unfortunate, throwing out her hands as if to repulse her mother. "Forgive me!" "No, no!" said Calebasse, in a convulsed voice; and she fell back, almost without consciousness, into the arms of the assistants. A shade passed over the impassible face of the widow; her dry and burning eyes became moistened. At this moment she met the eyes of her son. After a moment's hesitation, and as if she yielded to the effect of an inward struggle, she said to him, "And you?" Martial threw himself sobbing into the arms of his mother. "Enough!" said the widow, overcoming her emotion, and disengaging herself from the embraces of her son. "He is waiting," she added, pointing to the executioner. Then she walked rapidly towards the chair, where she resolutely seated herself. The spark of maternal sensibility, which had for a moment lighted up the dark recesses of this corrupted heart, was extinguished for ever. "Sir," said the veteran to Martial, approaching him with interest, "do not remain here. Come, come." Martial, stupified with horror and alarm, mechanically followed the soldier. Two of the assistants had carried the wretched Calebasse to another chair; one of them sustained the almost lifeless body, while the other, by means of whip cord exceedingly fine, tied her hands behind her back, and also fastened her feet together by the ankles, allowing cord enough to enable her to walk slowly.

The executioner and his assistants performed the same operation on the widow, whose features underwent no alteration; only from time to time she coughed slightly. When the condemned were thus prevented from offering any resistance, the executioner, drawing from his pocket a long pair of scissors, said to her with politeness, "Have the goodness, madame, to bend your head." The widow obeyed, saying, "We are good customers; you have had my husband; now here are his wife and daughter." Without replying, the executioner gathered in his left hand the long grey hair of the condemned, and commenced cutting very short, par-

ticularly about the neck. "This makes the third time that I have have had my hair dressed in my life time," said the widow, with a horrible laugh: "the day of my first communion, when they put on my veil; the day of my marriage, when they put on my orange blossoms; and now to-day—is it not so?—the head dress of death?" The executioner remained silent. The hair of the condemned being thick and coarse, the operation was so long being performed, that the hair of Calebasse lay strewed upon the ground before the mother's was half finished. "You do not know of what I am thinking?" said the widow, after having looked at her daughter again. The executioner continued to keep silence. Nothing could be heard but the clipping of scissors and a kind of hiccough and rattling from the throat of Calebasse. At this moment a venerable priest was seen in the corridor who approached, and spoke to the director. This holy minister came to make a last effort to soften the heart of the widow. "I think," resumed the widow, seeing that the executioner did not reply, "I think at five years old, my daughter, whose head is to be cut off, was the handsomest child I ever saw. She had flaxen hair and rosy cheeks. Then, who would have told me that—" After a pause, she cried, with a burst of laughter, and an expression impossible to be described, "What a comedy is fate!" At this moment the last locks of the condemned fell upon her shoulders. "It is finished, Madame," said the executioner, politely. "Thank you, I recommend to you my son Nicolas," said the widow; "you will dress his hair some of these days!" A keeper came and whispered a few words to her "No; I have already said, no," answered she roughly. The priest heard these words, raised his eyes towards heaven, clasped his hands and disappeared. "Madame, we are going to set out: will you take something?" said the executioner, obsequiously. "Thank you; to-night I will take a swallow of earth." And the widow, after this new sarcasm, stood up erect. Although her step was firm, the executioner obligingly wished to assist her; she made a gesture of impatience, and said in a harsh and imperious tone. "Do not touch me; I have a firm step and a good eye. On the scaffold you will see if I have a good voice, and if I speak words of repentance." And the widow leaving the dungeon, escorted by the executioner and an assistant, entered the corridor. The two assistants were obliged to carry Calebasse on a chair: she was dying. The funeral *cortege* ascended the stone staircase, which conducted to a court on the outside. The sun with its warm

and golden light, gilded the tops of the high white walls around the court, and contrasted with the pure blue of the sky. The air was soft and balmy; never was a spring morning more smiling, more magnificent. In this court were seen a detachment of the gens d'armes, a hack, and a long, narrow vehicle, painted yellow, drawn by three post horses, which neighed gaily, shaking the little bells on their harness. This vehicle was entered from behind like an omnibus. This was the cause of a last joke from the widow.

"The conductor will not say *full*," said she, as she mounted the step, as lightly as the cord which confined her ancles would allow. Calebasse, expiring, and sustained by an assistant, was placed in the carriage opposite her mother and the door closed.

CHAPTER XVI.

MARTIAL AND THE CHOURINEUR.

Before we pursue our narrative, let us say a few words on the recently established connexion between the Chourineur and Martial.

As soon as Germain had left the prison, the Chourineur, who easily proved that he had robbed himself, confessed to the judge the reason of this singular deceit, and was set at liberty after a severe and just reproof.

Not having then recovered Fleur de Marie, and wishing to recompense the Chourineur (to whom he already owed his life) for this new act of devotion, Rodolphe, to crown the happiness of his rude protégé, had lodged him in the Hotel of the Rue Plumet promising to take him in his suite when he returned to Germany. We have already said that the Chourineur felt for Rodolphe the faithful attachment of a dog for his master. To live under the same roof with the prince; to see him sometimes; to await with impatience a new opportunity of sacrificing himself for his interests, were the limits of the ambition and happiness of the Chourineur, which he preferred a thousand times to money and the possession of the farm at Algiers.

But when the prince had discovered his daughter, all was changed: notwithstanding his lively gratitude towards the man to whom he owed his life, he could not take with him to Germany this witness of Fleur de Marie's first shame. Determined in any other manner to satisfy the Chourineur, he sent for him and told him that he expected a new service from his attachment. At these words,

the face of the Chourineur brightened, but it soon became clouded when he learned that not only must he not follow the prince to Germany, but that he must leave the hotel that very day. It is useless to speak of the brilliant compensations that Rodolphe offered to the Chourineur: the money that was designed for him—the deed for the farm at Algiers—anything more that he wished: all was at his disposal. The Chourineur, cut to the heart, refused all; and for the first time in his life, perhaps, this man shed tears. It needed all the pursuasion of Rodolphe to induce him to accept his first gifts. The next day the prince sent for La Louve and Martial: and without informing them that Fleur de Marie was his daughter, he asked them what he could do for them. Perceiving their hesitation and remembering what Fleur de Marie had told him about the slightly uncivilized tastes of La Louve and her husband, he offered them either a considerable amount of money, or the half of this amount, and lands in the vicinity of the farm which he had bought for the Chourineur. Both of them endowed with good natural impulses, sympathized the better with each other, since they each had reason to seek solitude—the one for her past life, the other for the crimes of his family. He was not deceived: Martial and La Louve accepted his offer with transport; then having, through the intervention of Murphy, made the acquaintance of the Chourineur, they mutually congratulated each other on the agreeable prospects before them in Algiers. Notwithstanding the deep sadness into which he was plunged, the Chourineur, affected by the cordial advances of Martial and his wife, responded to them with warmth. In a short time a sincere friendship united the future colonists. La Louve and Martial, unable to divert the melancholy of their new friend, discontinued their efforts, trusting that the voyage, and the active employment of their future life, would change his thoughts.

These facts established, it will be understood that, informed of the painful interview that Martial was obliged to undergo in obedience to the last wishes of his mother, the Chourineur had wished to accompany his new friend to the gate of Bicetre, where he awaited him in the coach which took them back to Paris, after Martial, deeply agitated, had left the dungeon, where the terrible preparations for the execution of his mother and sister were being made. The physiognomy of the Chourineur was completely altered; the expression of happiness which ordinarily characterized his manly face, was replaced with dejection: his voice, also, had lost some-

what of its roughness. Grief, until now a stranger to him, had prostrated his energetic nature. He looked at Martial with compassion. "Cheer up, said the Chourineur to him; "you have done all that a brave fellow could do—it is all over; think of your wife, of those children whom you prevented following the bad example of their parents; and then this evening we shall have quitted Paris, never to return; and you will never again hear of that which afflicts you." "It is all the same, do you see, Chourineur. After all, it is my mother; it is my sister." "But, what would you—this has happened; and when things are unavoidable, we must submit," said the Chourineur, suppressing a sigh. After a moment's silence, Martial said to him, cordially, "I, also, ought to console you, my poor fellow—always this melancholy." "Always Martial." "Well, my wife and I confidently hope that, once away from Paris, it will be dissipated." "Yes," said the Chourineur, hardly restraining a shudder, "if I leave Paris—" "But we set out this evening." "That is to say, *you*—you go this evening." "And you, then, have you changed your intention recently?" "No." "Well, what then?" The Chourineur remained silent; then he replied, struggling to preserve his calmness. "Hold, Martial: I know that you will laugh at me; but I wish to tell you all, so that, if any thing should happen to me, this, at least, will prove that I was not deceived." "What is it, then?" "When M. Rodolphe asked if it would be agreeable for us to go together to Algiers, and to be neighbours there, I did not wish to deceive either you or your wife. I told you what I had been." "Let us speak no more about that. You have undergone your punishment—you are as good as the best of us. But I can conceive that like me, you would prefer to live abroad, than to remain here, where, no matter how honest, and how easy in our circumstances we may be, we will always be reproached. But between us, the past is gone, gone for ever. Be tranquillized; we rely upon you, as you may rely upon us" "Between us, perhaps, the past will be forgotten; but, as I said to Rodolphe, there is a providence above, and I have killed a man." "It is a great misfortune; but, you did not know what you were doing; you were not yourself; and, besides, you have saved the lives of others, and that ought to count in your favour." "Listen, Martial: I have now spoken to you of my unhappiness, because, formerly, I often had a dream, in which I saw the serjeant whom I killed; for a long time I have not had this dream, and last

night I dreamed it." "It was chance." "No, this forebodes that some misfortune will happen to me this day." "You are unreasonable, my good comrade." "I have a presentiment that I shall never quit Paris." "Once more, you have not common sense. Your sorrow at the thought of quitting our benefactor, the knowledge that you were to accompany me to-day to Bicetre, where so painful an interview awaited me; all this agitated you last night; hence, your dream returned to you. The Chourineur sadly shook his head. "It has returned to me on the night before the departure of Rodolphe, for it is to-day that he goes." "To-day?" "Yes; yesterday I sent a messenger to his hotel, not daring to go there myself; he has forbidden it. They told him that the prince would set out this morning, at eleven o'clock, by the Barrier Charenton. Thus, when we shall have arrived in Paris, I will prostrate myself there, to endeavour to see him for the last time! the last!" "He appears so good that I comprehend well how you must love him." "Love him!" said the Chourineur, with deep and passionate emotion; "oh yes!" do you understand, Martial? to sleep on the ground; to eat black bread; to be his dog; but to be where he is, I asked nothing more; it was too much; he did not wish it." "He has been so generous to you!" "It is not that which makes me love him so much; it is because he said to me that I had heart and honour; at a time when I was as ferocious as a wild beast, when I despised myself as the vilest of the vile, he made me comprehend that there was still some good in me, since, my punishment, I had repented, I had industriously laboured to gain an honest livelihood; wishing to injure no one, although every one looked upon me as a finished scoundrel, which was not very encouraging. In most instances, all that is necessary to keep one in the right path are words of encouragement and kindness. Thus, when Rodolphe said these words to me, dame! my heart beat proudly. Since then I would go through fire to do a good action. Oh that the opportunity might offer!" "Truly, since you are a thousand times better than you used to be, you should not have such evil presentments. Your dream signifies nothing."

"Well, we shall see. I do not search for a misfortune; there can be no greater one for me, than never to see him more. Rodolphe! In my sphere, I would have been at his service, body and soul, always ready. You know, Martial, that I am but an earth-worm in comparison with him; well sometimes it happens that the most insignificant can be useful to the most powerful.

"Who knows? one day perhaps, he will recall you." "Oh! no! he said to me, 'My good fellow, you must promise me that you will never see me again; by so doing, you will render me a service.' You understand, Martial, I promised; on the honour of a man, to keep my word; but it is hard."

"Once at our destination, you will forget, by degrees, your sorrow. We will work, and live tranquil, like good farmers, except occasionally trying our skill, as marksmen, on the Arabs, ah! there La Louve will help us." "If it should come to blows, I am at home there, Martial," said the Chourineur, slightly animated, "I am unmarried, and I have been a trooper." "And I a poacher!" "But you have a wife, and these two children you have adopted. As for me, I have nothing but my hide, and since it can no longer serve M. Rodolphe, I have no regard for it. So, if we should be obliged to give them their change, it's my affair."

"Ah! we'll both have something to do with it." "No; I alone—thunder! leave the Bedouins to me." "Good; Come, Chourineur, we will be true brothers, and you can converse with me of your sorrow, for I have my own. The recollection of this day will last all my life. One cannot see his mother, his sister, as I have seen mine, without bearing it in rememberance. We will not fear to look danger in the face; we will be half farmers, half soldiers. If we can start any game, we will hunt. We will bring up the children like honest people, and you shall be, almost, their uncle, while we will be brothers. How does it suit you?" said Martial, offering his hand to the Chourineur." "It suits me well, my good Martial; and then, sorrow shall kill me, or I will kill it, as the saying is." "It will not kill you; we shall grow old in our wilderness, and every night we will say, brother, thanks to M. Rodolphe; that shall be our prayer for him." "Hold, Martial, you put balsam on my wound." "Good; this foolish dream, you will think nothing of it, I hope?" "I will endeavour; ah! well, you will call for us at four o'clock? the diligence starts at five." Agreed. But here we are in Paris; I will stop the coach, and go on foot to the Barrier Charenton; I will await Mr. Rodolphe." The carriage stopped, and the Chourineur got out. "Don't forget, my good comrade," said Martial: "at four o'clock!" The Chourineur had forgotten that it was the morning after the "mid-lent," thus he was much surprised at the spectacle, which was presented to his view when he walked through a part of the exterior boulevard, which he crossed on his way to the Barrier Charenton.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE HAND OF PROVIDENCE.

THE Chourineur was carried along, in spite of himself, by a popular torrent, which, descending from the taverns of the Faubourg de la Glaciere, collected round the approaches of the Barrier, to pour out on the Boulevard Saint Jacques, where the execution was to take place. Although it was broad daylight, yet still could be heard at a distance the resounding music of the orchestras of the public houses, and above all, the sonorous vibrations of the *cornets-a-piston.*

It needs the pencil of Rembrandt to portray the hideous, almost fantastical appearance of this multitude. Almost all, were dressed in old masquerading costumes; those who had not been able to obtain this *luxury*, had fastened on their clothes old rags, of flaunting colours; some young men were attired in women's apparel, torn, and soiled with mud; all these faces, haggard from debauch and vice, bloated by intoxication, sparkled with savage joy in thinking that, after a night of drunken orgies, they were going to see the two women put to death for whom the scaffold was raised. The scum of the population of Paris, this immense mob was composed of bandits and abandoned women, who demand each day from crime their daily bread, and who each night return well filled to their dens. The exterior boulevard being very contracted at this place, the closely packed crowd entirely blocked up the passage-way. In spite of his strength, the Chourineur was obliged to remain almost immovable in the midst of this compact mass. The prince, leaving the Rue Plumet at ten o'clock, as they had told him, would not pass the Barrier Charenton until about eleven, and it was not yet seven. Although formerly he had associated with the degraded classes to which this mob belonged, the Chourineur, on again finding himself among them, felt invincible disgust. Crowded by the mob against the wall of one of the public houses, through the open window from whence escaped the deafening sounds of a brass band, the Chourineur saw, against his will, a strange spectacle.

In a large low room, surrounded by benches and tables covered with the remains of a repast, broken plates, and overturned bottles, a dozen of men and women disguised, half drunk, were dancing *La Chahut*, a dance which was never performed except at the end of the *ball*, when the municipal guards had retired.

Among the depraved couples who figured in this revel, the Chourineur remarked two who were applauded above all by the disgusting immodesty of their postures, gestures, and words. The first couple were composed of a man disguised as a bear, by means of a waistcoat and trousers of black sheepskin. The head of the animal, had been replaced by a kind of hood of long hair, which entirely covered the face; two holes near the eyes, and a large slit over the mouth, allowed him to see, to speak, and to breathe. This masked man, one of the prisoners who had escaped from La Force (among whom were also Barbillon and the two murderers arrested at the *tapis-franc,*) this man was Nicolas Martial, the son, the brother of the two women for whom the scaffold was erected, close at hand. Dragged into this act of inhuman insensibility by one of his companions, a formidable bandit, this wretch dared, with the aid of his disguise, to yield himself to the last joys of the carnival.

The woman with whom he danced was dressed as a suttler, with a leather cap, the ribands torn, a kind of jacket of faded red cloth, ornamented with three rows of copper buttons, hussar fashion; a green petticoat, and pantaloons of white calico; her black hair fell in disorder on her face; her ghastly and livid features expressed impudence and effrontery. The *vis-a-vis* of these dancers were not less vile. The man of very tall stature, disguised as *Robert Macaire,* had daubed his bony face with soot, besides, a large band covered his left eye, and the dead white of the right one, standing out in relief with the black face, made it still more hideous. The lower part of the visage of the Skeleton, disappeared entirely in a high cravat made of an old red shawl. He wore a grey hat, rasped, flattened, dirty, and without a crown; a green coat in tatters; madder-coloured pantaloons, patched in a thousand places, and tied around the ancles with twine; this assassin, overdoing the most grotesque and most impudent positions of the *Chahut,* now to the right, now to the left, backward and forward, with his long limbs hard as iron, folded and unfolded them with so much vigour and elasticity, that one would have said they were hung on springs. Worthy corypheus of this "*saturnale,*" his partner, a tall, brazen creature, wearing a police cap stuck on a powdered wig with a long tail, had on a vest and trousers of green cut velvet, fastened round her waist by an orange scarf, whose long ends floated behind. A fat, masculine-looking woman, the Ogresse of the *tapis-franc,* seated on

one of the benches, held on her lap the Tartan mantles of this creature and of the suttler, while they danced. Among the other dancers, was a little cripple dressed as a devil, with red drawers, and a horrible grinning green mask. Notwithstanding his infirmity, this little monster was of surprising agility; his precocious depravity reached, if it did not surpass that of his frightful companions, he gambolled away, with equal effrontery, opposite his partner, a fat woman disguised as a shepherdess, who excited still more the impudence of her partner by her shouts of laughter. No charge being brought against Tortillard, and Bras-Rouge having been provisionally left in prison, the child, on the demand of his father, had been reclaimed by Micou the receiver. As secondary figures of the picture which we have endeavoured to paint, let the reader imagine all that is of the lowest, the most shameless, the most monstrous in this reckless, rapacious, sanguinary debauch, which more and more hostile to social order, and to which we have wished to call the attention of reflecting persons on terminating this recital. * * * *

Still more excited by the laughter, and bravos of the crowd collected at the windows, the actors of the abominable orgies shouted to the orchestra to play a last "*galop.*" The musicians, delighted at the prospect of a termination to their labours, yielded to the general wish, and played with energy a lively "*galop.*" At the sounds of the brazen instruments, the excitement increased, the dancers seized with a sort of phrensy, following the Skeleton and his partner, commenced a round infernal, uttering savage shouts. A thick dust, raised by these furious shufflings, arose from the floor, and cast a cloud round this whirlwind of men and women, it was no longer inebriety—it was delirium; it was phrensy; room was wanting. The Skeleton cried with a breathless voice, "Clear the door! We are going out—upon the boulevard." "Yes, yes!" cried the dense crowd at the windows, "a '*galop*' to the Barrier Saint Jacques!" "It will soon be time for them to shorten the two women." "The executioner throws doublets: it is droll!" "Accompanied by the 'cornet-a-piston.'" "We will dance the cotillion of the guillotine!" "Go ahead of the woman without any head!" cried Tortillard. "This will enliven the condemned." "I invite the widow." "I invite the daughter." "That will make old Charlot (the executioner) gay." "He will dance '*La Chahut*' in his *shop* with his *customers.*" "Death to honest people. Long live the robbers and assassins!" cried the

Skeleton, in a roaring voice. These jests, these cannibal threats, accompanied by vulgar songs, cries, whistlings, shouts, were augmented still more when the band of the Skeleton had made a large opening through the middle of this compact crowd. Then it wasa frightful melée; then were heard howlings, imprecations, and bursts of mad laughter, which no longer appeared human. The tumult was suddenly carried to its height by two new incidents. The vehicle containing the condemned, accompanied by its escort of cavalry, appeared in the distance at the corner of the boulevard; then all the mob rushed in this direction, uttering a howl of ferocious satisfaction. At this moment, also, the crowd was met by a courier coming from the Boulevard des Invalides, and galloping towards the Barrier de Charenton. He was dressed in a light blue jacket, with a yellow collar, laced with silver on all the seams; but as a sign of deep mourning, he wore black breeches, with heavy boots; his cap, also, bordered with silver, was surrounded with a crape. In fine, on his dress were, in relief, the sovereign arms of the house of Gerolstein. The courier walked his horse; but he was almost obliged to stop when he found himself in the crowd of which we have spoken. Although he cried "Take care!" and guided his horse with the greatest precaution, cries, threats, abuses, soon arose against him. "Does he want to get on our backs with his camel, this fellow?" "What a silver plate on his body—thank you!" cried Tortillard, under his green mask with a red tongue. "If he gives us impudence, let us put him on his feet." "And we'll cut off the lacings of his jacket to melt them," said Nicolas. "And we'll rip you open if you are not satisfied, dirty footman," added the Skeleton, addressing the courier, and seizing the bridle of his horse. The courier, a resolute man, said to the Skeleton, raising the handle of his whip, "If you do not let go the bridle of my horse, I will cut you across the face." "You, you pitiful scoundrel?" "Yes; I am walking my horse; when I cry, Take care! you have no right to stop me. The carriage of my lord follows me. I already hear the cracking of the whips. Let me pass." "Your lord?" said the Skeleton. I will knock him down if it pleases me. I never have stabbed a lord: this gives me the desire to do it." "There are no more lords—'*Vive la Charte!*'" cried Tortillard; and humming these lines of the *Parisienne*, "Advance! march against their cannon," he caught hold of one of the courier's boots, and bearing with all his weight, made him tremble in his seat. A

blow with the handle of his whip on the head of Tortillard paid him for his audacity. But immediately the enraged populace threw themselves upon the courier; he dashed the spurs into the sides of his horse, and endeavoured to disengage himself, but could not succeed; neither was he able to draw his hunting-knife. Dismounted, thrown backwards, he would have been killed had it not been for the arrival of Rodolphe's carriage, which diverted the attention of these wretches. For some time the carriage of the prince, drawn by four post-horses, went only on a walk, and one of the two footmen in mourning (on account of Sarah's death) had prudently descended, and stood near one of the doors. The postilions cried, "Take care!" and advanced with caution. Rodolphe, as well as his daughter, was dressed in deep mourning; holding one of her hands, he looked at her with unspeakable happiness; the sweet, and charming face of Fleur de Marie appeared to advantage in her little black crape bonnet, which set off her fair complexion, and the brilliant tints of her beautiful flaxen hair; one would have said that the azure sky was reflected in her large eyes, which had never been of more transparent blue. Although her sweetly-smiling face expressed calmness and happiness, yet, when she looked at her father, a shade of melancholy, sometimes even of indefinable sadness, cast its shadow on the features of Fleur de Marie. "You are displeased at my calling you so early this morning, and for having advanced the moment of departure?" said Rodolphe, smiling. "Oh! no, my father—the morning is so beautiful!" "That was my thought; our day's journey will be better divided by leaving early, and you less fatigued. Murphy, my aides-de-camp, and the carriage with your women, will join us at our first stopping-place, where you will repose." "Dear father, you are always thinking of me." "Yes, my child, it is impossible for me to have any other thought," said the prince, smiling; then he added, with a burst of tenderness, "Oh! I love you so much—your forehead—quick."

Fleur de Marie leaned towards her father, and Rodolphe kissed her beautiful forehead. It was at this moment that the carriage, approaching the crowd, had lessened its speed. Rodolphe let down the window, and said in German to the footman who stood near the door, "Well, Frantz, what is the matter? what is this tumult?" "My lord, there is such a crowd that the horses cannot move." "And what is the reason of the crowd?" "My lord, an execution is about to take place." "Ah, this is

Death of the Innocents.

frightful," cried Rodolphe, throwing himself back in the carriage. "What is the matter, my father?" said Fleur de Marie, with anxiety. "Nothing; nothing, my child." "But these threatening cries; do you hear? they approach. What is that? My God!" "Frantz, order the postilions to turn and go to Charenton by another road, wherever it may be," said Rodolphe. "My lord, it is too late; we are in the crowd. They have stopped the horses. Some ill-looking people—" The footman could not say another word. The crowd, exasperated by the sanguinary shouts of the Skeleton and Nicolas, surrounded the carriage. In spite of the efforts and threats of the postilions, the horses were stopped, and Rodolphe saw himself surrounded on all sides by horrible, threatening, furious faces; pre-eminent among all, was the Skeleton, who advanced to the door of the carriage. "My father, take care," cried Fleur de Marie, throwing her arms around Rodolphe's neck. "It is you, then, who are the lord?" said the Skeleton, thrusting his hideous head into the carriage. At this insolence, Rodolphe would have given way to the natural violence of his character, had it not been for his daughter; but he restrained himself, and answered coolly, "Why do you stop my carriage?" "Because it pleases us," said the Skeleton, placing his bony hands on the door. "Every one in his turn; yesterday you trampled on the 'canaille;' to-day the 'canaille' will trample on you, if you stir." "My father, we are lost!" murmured Fleur de Marie, in a low voice. "Compose yourself; I comprehend," said the prince; "it is the last day of the Carnival. These people are drunk. I will soon get rid of them." "We must make him get out, and his woman also," cried Nicolas. "You appear to be drunk, and doubtless have a desire to drink more," said Rodolphe, taking a purse from his pocket. "Here, this is for you; do not detain my carriage." And he threw him his purse. Tortillard caught it. "Exactly; you are going a journey; your pockets must be well lined, so hand out some more money, or I will kill you. I have nothing to risk. I ask you for your money or your life in broad daylight. It is a farce," said the Skeleton, intoxicated with wine and rage; and he roughly opened the door. The patience of Rodolphe was exhausted; uneasy for Fleur de Marie, whose alarm increased at each moment, and thinking that a decided stand would overawe this wretch, he sprang from his carriage to seize the Skeleton by the throat. The latter drew back quickly, taking from his pocket a

long knife; then he threw himself upon Rodolphe. Fleur de Marie, seeing the poignard of the bandit raised against her father, uttering a piercing cry, sprang out of the carriage, and clasped her arms around him. Without the aid of the Chourineur they would have perished. He had recognised the livery of the prince, and succeeded, after superhuman efforts, in approaching the Skeleton. At the moment that he threatened the prince with his knife, the Chourineur, with one hand arrested the arm of the brigand, and with the other seized him by the throat, and threw him over backward. Although taken by surprise, the Skeleton turned, recognised the Chourineur, and cried, "The man with the grey blouse of La Force! this time I will do for you;" and throwing himself furiously on the Chourineur, he plunged the knife in his bosom. The Chourineur staggered, but did not fall; the crowd supported him. "The guard! here is the guard!" cried several voices. At these words, at the sight of the assassination of the Chourineur, the crowd, fearing to be compromised in the murder, dispersed and fled in all directions. When the guard arrived, guided by the courier, who had escaped when the mob had abandoned him to surround the carriage of the prince, there only remained on this mournful scene, Rodolphe, his daughter, and the Chourineur covered with blood. The two footmen of the prince had seated him on the ground, with his back against a tree.

All this had passed more rapidly than it is possible to write it. The prince, pale and agitated, supported the fainting Fleur de Marie in his arms, while the postilions re-adjusted the traces. "Quick!" said the prince to his people, who were occupied in assisting the Chourineur. "Carry this unfortunate man into this tavern. And you," added he, addressing his courier, "get on the box, and drive with all speed to the hotel for Doctor David. The carriage was rapidly driven off, and the two domestics carried the Chourineur into the saloon where the orgies had taken place, and where still remained some of the women who had figured in it. "My poor child," said Rodolphe to his daughter, "I will lead you to a chamber in this house, and you will await me there, for I cannot abandon solely to the care of my people this courageous man, who once more saved my life." "Oh, my father, I entreat you," cried Fleur de Marie with alarm, clinging to the arm of Rodolphe, "do not leave me alone. I would die with fear. I will go where you go—" "But this

is a frightful sight." "But, thanks to this man, you live for me, my father; at least, permit me to unite with you in thanking and consoling him." The perplexity of the prince was great; his daughter seemed so much alarmed at remaining alone, that he was obliged to allow her to accompany him to the room where the Chourineur had been carried. The master of the public-house, assisted by several of the women who had remained (among whom was the ogresse of the tapis-franc), had laid the wounded man upon a mattress, and stanched his wounds. The Chourineur had just opened his eyes, when Rodolphe entered. At the sight of the prince, his countenance, of death-like paleness, brightened up a little; he smiled painfully, and said to him, in a feeble voice, "Ah, Mr. Rodolphe, how fortunate it was that I was there." "Brave and devoted — as always!" said the prince to him, in a mournful voice; "you have saved me again!" "I was going to the Barrier de Charenton—to see you depart; happily, I was stopped here by the crowd; besides, this was to happen to me; I said so to Martial; I had a presentiment." "A presentiment!" "Yes, Mr. Rodolphe; the dream of the sergeant—last night I had it—" "Forget these ideas. Hope. Your wound will not be mortal." "Oh, yes; the Skeleton has struck home. Never mind, I was right—to say to Martial—that an earthworm like me could sometimes be—useful—to a great lord like you—" "But it is life—life that I owe to you again." "We are quits, Mr. Rodolphe. You told me that I had a *heart and honour*. These words—do you see—Oh, I suffocate, my lord—without you—do me the honour—of—your hand—I feel that I am going—" "No; it is impossible," cried the prince, bending over the Chourineur, and pressing in his hands the icy fingers of the dying man. "No; you will live—you will live." "Mr. Rodolphe—do you see that there is something—up there—I have killed—with a blow of the knife?" said the Chourineur, in a voice feeble and indistinct. At this moment his eyes were fixed on Fleur de Marie, whom he had not yet perceived. Astonishment was painted on his dying face; he started, and said, "Ah, my God! La Goualeuse!" "Yes; she is my daughter. She blesses you for having preserved her father." "She—your daughter! here—that reminds me of our acquaintance—Mr. Rodolphe—and the—blows with the fists—at the end—but—this—blow with the knife—will be also—the blow—of the end. I have killed—they—kill—it is just." Then

he uttered a deep sigh, his head falling backward—he was dead! The noise of horses resounded without; the carriage of Rodolphe had met that of Murphy and David, eager to rejoin the prince. David and the squire entered. "David," said Rodolphe, wiping away his tears, and pointing to the Chourineur, "is there no hope?" "None, my lord," said the doctor, after a minute's examination. During this minute, a mute, but frightful scene passed between Fleur de Marie and the Ogresse, which Rodolphe had not noticed. When the Chourineur pronounced in a low tone the name of La Goualeuse, the Ogresse, raising her head, had quickly seen Fleur de Marie. Already the horrible woman had recognised Rodolphe in the person whom they called 'My lord.' He called La Goualeuse his daughter. Such a transformation stupified the Ogresse, who kept her staring eyes obstinately fixed on her former victim. Fleur de Marie, pale and alarmed, seemed fascinated by this look. The death of the Chourineur, the unexpected appearance of the Ogresse, who had just awakened, more grievously than ever, the remembrance of her former degradation, seemed to her of mournful presage. From this moment, Fleur de Marie was struck with one of those presentiments which often have, on characters like hers, an irresistible influence. * * * *

A short time after these sad events, Rodolphe and his daughter left Paris for ever.

THE MYSTERIES OF PARIS.

PART IX.

[The reader is reminded that about fifteen months have passed since the day when Rodolphe quitted Paris by the Barrier St. Jacques, after the murder of the Chourineur.]

CHAPTER I.

PRINCE HENRY D'HERKAUSEN TO COUNT MAXIMILIAN.

Oldenzaal, August 23, 1840.

I HAVE just returned from Gerolstein, where I have passed three months with the grand-duke and his family. I expected to have found a letter announcing your arrival at Oldenzaal, my dear Maximilian. Imagine my grief, my surprise, when I understood that you would be detained in Hungary several weeks longer.

I have not been able to write to you for four months, not knowing how to direct to you, and yet you had seriously promised me, at Vienna, at the moment of our separation, that you would be at Oldenzaal the first of August. I must, then, renounce the pleasure of seeing you; and never had I more desire to pour out my heart into yours, my good Maximilian, my oldest friend; for though we are both still young, our friendship is still old; it dates from our infancy.

What shall I say to you! Within three months a great revolution has taken place in me. I have reached one of those moments which decide a man's fate. Judge if I do not want your presence, your advice. But you will not fail me much longer; whatever concerns detain you in Hungary, you will come, Maximilian; you must come, I conjure you, for I shall need the most earnest consolation, and I cannot go to you. My father, whose health becomes feebler, has recalled me from Gerolstein. It is impossible for me to leave him. I have so much to tell you that I shall be prolix, for

I have to recount to you the most painful, the most romantic incident of my life. Strange, sad chance! we are fatally distant from each other: we, inseparables; we, two brothers; both, the most fervent apostles of thrice holy friendship; we, who were so proud of proving that the Cazlas and the Posa of our Schiller are not idealties, and that, like these divine creations of the great poet, we know how to taste the sweet delights of a tender and mutual attachment! Oh, my friend, why were you not there? For three months my heart has been overflowing with emotions inexpressibly sweet and sad. And I was alone; I am alone now. Pity me; you, who know my sensibility at times so fancifully expansive; you who have often seen my eyes moistened with tears at the simple recital of a generous action, at the view of a beautiful sunset, or in a quiet and starry summer night. You remember the past year, during our excursion to the ruins of Oppenfeld—the borders of the great lake—our silent reveries during that magnificent evening, so calm, so poetical, so serene.

Strange contrast! it was three days before that bloody duel, in which I would not take you for my second, for I should have suffered too much for you if I had been wounded under your eyes—that duel, in which my second unfortunately killed the young Frenchman, the Viscount St. Remy. Apropos, do you know what has become of that dangerous siren St. Remy brought to Oppenfeld, but whose name was, I think, Cecily David?

You will smile my friend, to see me wander thus among vague remembrances of the past, instead of proceeding to the grave confessions which I have announced to you: it is because, in spite of myself, I recoil from these confessions; I know your severity; I am afraid of being scolded, because, instead of having acted with reflection, with wisdom (alas for the wisdom of one-and-twenty!) I have suffered myself to be borne along blindly on the current which carried me forward. It is only since my return from Gerolstein, that I have so to speak, awakened from the enchanting vision of the last three months, and this waking is sad. Come then, my friend, hear me with indulgence. I begin with casting down my eyes; I dare not look at you, for as you read these lines your features will become so grave, so severe, Stoical man! Having obtained leave of absence for six months, I left Vienna, and remained here some time with my father; his health was then good, and he advised me to go and visit my excellent aunt, Princess Julianna, the superior of the Abbey of Gerolstein. I have told you,

my friend, that my grandmother was cousin-german of the grandfather of the present grand-duke; and that the latter, Gustavus Rodolphe, on account of this relationship, has always treated my father and myself very kindly, as cousins. You know, also, I believe, that during a very long journey which the prince recently made into France, he gave to my father the charge of the government of the duchy of Gerolstein.

You recollect that last year, during our journey on the banks of the Rhine, we were informed that the prince had found in France, and had married *in extremis*, the Countess M'Gregor, in order to legitimatise the birth of a daughter whom he had by her, in consequence of an early secret marriage, which was afterwards broken, from some illegality in the ceremony, and because it had been contracted against the will of the reigning grand-duke. This young daughter, so solemnly acknowledged, is that charming Princess Amelia, of whom Lord Dudley, who saw her at Gerolstein about a year since, spoke to us so often at Vienna, last winter. You recollect, we accused him of exaggeration. Strange chance! if any one had then told me—

But though you have undoubtedly now almost divined my secret, let me follow the march of events without interruption. The Convent of Saint Hermangilda, of which my aunt is the abbess, is hardly a quarter of a league distant from Gerolstein, for the abbey gardens border on the suburbs of the city. A charming house, completely isolated from the cloister, had been placed at my disposition by my aunt, who loves me, as you know, with a maternal tenderness. The day of my arrival she informed me that there was the next day to be a solemn reception and court ceremony; the grand-duke on that day was to make the official announcement of his approaching marriage with the Marchioness d'Harville, who had recently arrived at Gerolstein, accompanied by her father, the Count d'Orbigny. Some blame the prince for not having sought a sovereign alliance in his marriage (the grand-duchess, the former wife of the prince, belonged to the house of Bavaria); others, on the contrary, and my aunt is of the number of these, congratulate him for having preferred a young and amiable woman, who belongs to the highest nobility of France, to considerations of ambition. "My dear child," said my aunt to me on occasion of this solemn reception, which I was to attend the day after my arrival, "the most remarkable part of this fête will undoubtedly be the Pearl of Gerolstein."

"Who do you mean, my dear aunt?" "The Princess Amelia." "The daughter of the grand-duke? Lord Dudley spoke of her at Vienna with an enthusiasm which we called poetical exaggeration." "At my age, and in my position," replied my aunt, "one is not easily excited; and you will believe my judgment to be impartial, my dear child. Indeed, I assure you that in my whole life I never knew anything so enchanting as the Princess Amelia. I might speak to you of her angelic beauty, if she were not endowed with an inexpressible charm which is superior even to her beauty. Figure to yourself candour with dignity, and grace with modesty. From the first day in which the grand-duke presented me to her, I felt for this young princess an involuntary sympathy. Nor am I alone in this opinion. The Archduchess Sophia has been at Gerolstein for some days; she is the proudest and most haughty princess I know." "Very true, my aunt, her irony is terrible; at Vienna she was dreaded like the fire. Can the princess Amelia have found favour with her." "The other day she came here after having visited the House of Refuge which is placed under the superintendence of the young princess. 'Do you know,' said this dreaded archduchess to me, with her abrupt frankness: 'I have a mind singularly disposed to satire, have I not? Well, if I were to live long with the daughter of the grand-duke, I should become inoffensive; her goodness is so penetrating, so contagious.'" "But is my cousin, then, an enchantress?" said I to my aunt, smiling. "Her most powerful attraction in my eyes, at least," replied my aunt, "is that mingling of gentleness, modesty, and dignity, which gives the most touching expression to her angelic face." "Modesty is certainly a rare quality in a princess so young, so beautiful, so happy." "Remember, too, my dear child, how much better it is for the Princess Amelia to enjoy without vain ostentation, the high position which is incontestibly acquired for her: her elevation is recent." "In her conversation with you, dear aunt, has the princess ever made any allusion to her past fortunes?" "No; but when, notwithstanding my advanced age, I have spoken to her with the respect which is due to her, since her royal highness is the daughter of our sovereign, her ingenuous distress, mingled with gratitude and veneration for me, deeply moved me: for her noble and affable reserve proved to me that the present did not intoxicate her so much as to make her forget the past, and that she rendered to my age what I granted to her rank."

"Thus, my dear child, the more I have seen of the Princess

Amelia, the more I have felt my first impression confirmed. Since she has been here the good works she has accomplished are incredible, and she has done all with a reflection, a maturity of judgment which amazes me in a person of her age. Judge of them; at her request, the grand-duke has founded at Gerolstein an establishment for little orphan girls of five or six years old, and for young girls, also orphans or abandoned by their parents, who have reached the age of sixteen. The noble nuns of my abbey teach and direct the daughters of this house. In going to visit it, I have often occasion to observe the adoration which these poor disinherited creatures entertain towards the Princess Amelia. Every day she goes to pass several hours in this establishment, which is placed under her especial protection; and it is not only gratitude, that these poor girls and the nuns feel for her highness, it is almost fanaticism." "The Princess Amelia must be an angel," replied I to my aunt. "An angel—yes, an angel," replied she, "for you cannot imagine with what melting goodness she treats her protegés! and with what pious solicitude she watches over them—I have never seen the susceptibility of misfortune more delicately treated, it seems as if an irresistible sympathy especially attracts the princess towards this class of the abandoned poor. Finally, would you believe it, she, the daughter of a sovereign, never calls these young girls anything, but 'my sisters.'" At these last words of my aunt, I confess it to you, Maximilian, the tears came into my eyes. Do you not find something beautiful and holy in this conduct of the princess? You know my sincerity, I protest to you that I report the conversation of my aunt, almost word for word. "Since the princess," said I to her, "is so marvellously endowed, I shall feel great embarrassment when I am presented to her tomorrow; you know my insurmountable timidity, elevation of character overpowers me more even than that of rank, I am sure I shall appear to the princess as stupid as embarrassed. "Come, come," said my aunt, smiling, "she will take pity on you, my dear child, and the more so as you will not be a new acquaintance to her." "Dear aunt!" "Certainly." "How so?" "You recollect that when at the age of sixteen years, you quitted Oldenzaal to make a journey to Russia and England with your father, I had your portrait painted, in the costume which you wore at the first fancy ball given by the late grand-duchess?" "Yes, the costume of a German page of the sixteenth century." "Our excellent painter Fritz Mokker, while he faithfully re-produced your fea-

ures, not only retraced a personage of the sixteenth century, but, with the caprice of an artist, he amused himself with imitating even the manner and the appearance of pictures painted soon after that period. A few days after her arrival in Germany, the Princess Amelia remarked your portrait, and asked me with great simplicity what this charming picture of the olden time was? Her father smiled, and making a signal to me, answered her, 'This, portrait is that of one of our cousins, you see by his costume, my dear Amelia, of some three hundred years date. When he was very young he exhibited a rare courage and an excellent heart. Does he not in fact, display bravery in his bearing, and goodness in his smile?'" (I beg you, Maximilian, do not shrug up your shoulders with impatient disdain, at my writing such things about myself. It is hard for me to do it, you may suppose, but the sequel of this narrative will prove that these puerile details, of which I feel the bitter ridicule, are unfortunately indispensable :)

"The Princess Amelia," continued my aunt, "the dupe of this innocent pleasantry, agreed in opinion with her father, respecting the gentle and proud expression of your physiognomy, after having attentively examined the portrait. Afterwards when I went to see her at Gerolstein, she smilingly asked me the news of her cousin of the olden time. I then owned to her our deception, telling her that the fair page of the sixteenth century, was simply my nephew, Prince Henry d'Herkausen—Oldenzaal, now twenty-one years of age, Captain of his Majesty the Emperor of Austria's guards, and in everything excepting the costume, very like his portrait. At these words, the Princess Amelia," added my aunt, "blushed and became again serious as she almost always is. Since, then, she has not spoken to me again about the picture. Nevertheless, you see, my dear child, that you will not be entirely a stranger and a new face to your cousin, as the grand-duke calls you. So take courage and sustain the honour of your portrait," added my aunt smiling. I then left my aunt, and returned to my apartment.

I have never hidden from you my most secret thoughts, good or evil, I am therefore about to confess what absurd and foolish imaginations I allowed myself to indulge in after the conversation which I have just reported to you.

CHAPTER II.

PRINCE HENRY D'HERKAUSEN TO COUNT MAXIMILIAN.

You have often told me, my dear Maximilian, that I have no vanity; I believe that is true, and must believe so, to be able to continue this account without exposing myself to the charge of presumptuousness in your eyes.

When I was alone, in recalling my aunt's conversation, I could not help dreaming over with a secret satisfaction, that the Princess Amelia having observed the portrait of me, had asked a few days after, in jest, for news of her cousin of the olden time. I acknowledged that nothing was more foolish than to found the least hope on such an insignificant circumstance; but, as I always use the most entire frankness with you; this insignificant circumstance ravished me. Undoubtedly the praises which I have heard lavished upon the Princess Amelia by a woman as grave and austere as my aunt, rendered me yet more sensible to the distinction which she had deigned to bestow on me, or, rather, had granted to my portrait. However, as I tell you, this distinction awakened in me such foolish hopes, that now, in throwing back a calmer glance upon the past, I ask how I could have allowed myself to be drawn on to those thoughts which inevitably bordered on a precipice. Although a relation of the grand-duke, and always kindly welcomed by him, it was impossible for me to conceive the least hope of marriage with the princess, even if she had accepted my love, which was still more improbable. Our family holds an honourable rank, but it is poor, if we compare our fortune with the immense domains of the grand-duke, the richest prince of the Germanic Confederation; and then, I was hardly twenty-one years old; I was a mere captain in the Guards, without personal reputation; never, in short, would the grand-duke think of me for his daughter.

All these reflections should have preserved me from a passion which as yet I did not feel, but of which I had, so to speak, a singular presentiment. Alas! I gave myself up, on the contrary, to new childishness. I was wearing on my finger a ring which was formerly given me by Theckla (the good countess, whom you know); although this token of careless and frivolous love could not trouble me much, I heroically made of it a sacrifice to my new-born love, and the poor ring disappeared in the water under my window. It is useless to tell you what a night I pass-

ed; you can imagine it. I knew that the Princess Amelia was fair, and of angelic beauty; I endeavoured to imagine her features, her stature, her demeanour, the sound of her voice, the expression of her countenance; then, remembering my portrait which she had remarked upon, I recollected with regret that the cursed artist had flattered me; besides, in despair, I compared the picturesque costume of a page of the fifteenth century, with the severe uniform of His Imperial Majesty's captain of the Guards. Then to these foolish ideas succeeded now and then, I assure you, my friend, some generous thoughts, some noble impulses of the soul; I felt myself deeply moved, at the remembrances of what my aunt had told me of that adorable goodness of the Princess Amelia, who called the poor abandoned beings *her sisters*.

In fine—odd and inexplicable contrast—I have, you know, the most humble opinion of myself—and I was nevertheless, proud enough to suppose that the sight of my portrait had struck the princess; I had good sense enough to understand that an impassible distance separated me from her for ever, and yet I asked myself, with real anxiety, whether she would not find me unworthy of my portrait. I passed in real suffering the night of which I speak, and a part of the next day. The hour of reception arrived. I tried on two or three uniforms, finding each worse than the other, and set out for the palace of the grand-duke, much displeased with myself. Although Gerolstein is hardly a quarter of a league from the Abbey of St. Hermangilda, during the drive a thousand thoughts assailed me: an invincible presentiment forewarned me of that sort of crisis which governs the whole life; a sort of revelation told me that I was about to love passionately; to love as one loves but once; and, to heighten the fatality, this love, so highly, worthily placed, was always to be unfortunate to me. These ideas alarmed me so much, that I suddenly took the wise resolution of stopping my carriage, and returning to the abbey, and to my father, leaving to my aunt the duty of excusing me for my abrupt departure. Unfortunately, one of those vulgar causes, of which the effects are sometimes so immense, prevented me from executing this. My carriage having stopped at the entrance of the avenue leading to the palace, I leaned out of the window to give orders to return, when the Baron and Baroness Koller, who, like me, were on their way to court, perceived me, and ordered their carriage also to stop. The baron, seeing me in uniform, said,

"Can I assist you in any thing, my dear prince? what has happened to you? Since you are on your way to the palace, will you not join us, if any thing has happened to your horses!" Nothing could have been more easy, you may say, my friend, than for me to have made some excuse for leaving the baron, and to have regained the abbey. I suppose it is so; but whether it was weakness, or a secret desire to escape from the salutary resolution I had just formed, I replied, with an embarrassed air, that I was giving orders to my coachman to inquire at the gate of the palace whether we entered by the new pavilion, or through the marble gate. "The entrance is through the marble gate, my dear prince," replied the baron; "it is a grand gala reception. Tell your coachman to follow mine, I will show you the way." You know, Maximilian, how much of a fatalist I am; I would have returned to the abbey, to spare myself the vexations which I foresaw; fate opposed it; I abandoned myself to my star. You do not know the grand ducal palace of Gerolstein, my friend. According to all those who have visited the capitals of Europe, there is not, with the exception of Versailles, a royal residence, of which the whole pile of buildings, and the avenues to it, have a more majestic appearance. The court of marble, a vast hemicycle, is so called, because, with the exception of a broad path around it, in which the carriages pass, it is paved with marble of every colour, having magnificent mosaics. In the centre of it is placed an immense basin of antique marble, fed by abundant springs of water, which fall continually into a large porphyry vase.

This court of honour is surrounded by a row of white marble statues, bearing torches of gilded bronze, whence floods of dazzling gas are poured out. Alternating with these statues, Medicean vases, raised on their richly-sculptured pedestals, contain enormous rose laurels, whose lustrous foliage, seen in the resplendent light, shines with a metalic verdure. The carriages stopped at the foot of a double row of balustrades, which led to the peristyle of the palace; at the foot of this staircase, two cavaliers of the guard of the grand-duke, mounted on black horses, stood as sentries. You, my friend, who are so fond of military men, would have been struck with the severe and martial air of these two colossal figures, whose cuirasses and brazen casques of an antique form, without ornament or crest, sparkled in the light. These cavaliers wore blue coats with yellow collars, pantaloons of white buckskin, and stout boots reaching above the knee. Fi-

nally, you, my friend, who are fond of military details, I will add, that at the top of the steps, on each side of the door, two grenadiers of the regiment of infantry of the grand ducal guard were on duty. They resemble, I was told, in appearance, with the single exception of the colour of the dress and its linings, the grenadiers of Napolean. After having crossed the vestibule, where, with their halberts in their hands, stood the swiss servants of the prince, I ascended a staircase of white marble, which led to a portico, ornamented with columns of jasper, surmounted by a gilded cupola. I afterwards entered into the guard-room, at the door of which were standing a chamberlain and an aid-de-camp on service, whose duty it was to lead up to his royal highness such persons as were entitled to be presented to him. My relationship, though distant, gave me a right to this honour. An aid-de-camp preceded me into a long gallery filled with men in court-dresses or uniforms, and ladies in full costume.

While I was slowly passing through this brilliant crowd, I heard words which heightened still more my emotion. On all sides people were admiring the angelic beauty of the princess Amelia, the charming face of the Marchioness d'Harville, and the truly imperial air of the Archduchess Sophia, who had recently arrived from Munich, with the Archduke Stanislaus, and was soon to go to Warsaw. But while all rendered homage to the lofty dignity of the archduchess, and to the distinguished grace of the Marchioness d'Harville, it was acknowledged that nothing was more ideal than the enchanting form of the Princess Amelia.

As I approached the spot where the grand-duke and his daughter were standing, I felt my heart beat violently. At the moment when I reached the door of this saloon, (I forgot to tell you that there was a ball and court concert,) the illustrious Liszt had just seated himself at the piano, and the deepest silence succeeded to the slight murmur of conversation. While awaiting the end of the piece, I remained standing at the door. Then, my dear Maximilian, for the first time I saw the princess Amelia. Allow me to paint to you this scene, for I feel an inexpressible pleasure in gathering up all these recollections. Imagine, my friend, a vast saloon, furnished with royal splendour, dazzling with light, and hung with crimson draperies, about which ran a border of foliage embroidered in gold. In the first row, in large gilded chairs, were seated the Archduchess Sophia (to whom the prince was doing the honours of the palace), on her left the Mar-

chioness d'Harville, and on her right the Princess Amelia. Standing behind them was the grand-duke, wearing the uniform of colonel of his guards. He seemed to have renewed his youth by his happiness, and did not look more than thirty years old. Near him stood the Archduke Stanislaus, in the costume of a field-martial. Then came the Princess Amelia's ladies of honour, the wives of the grand dignitaries of the court, and, finally, the latter themselves.

Need I tell you that the Princess Amelia, by her rank less than by her grace and beauty, reigned supreme in this dazzling assemblage? Do not condemn me, my friend, without reading this description. Though it fall a thousand times below the reality, you may comprehend my adoration; you will understand that as soon as I saw her I loved her, and that the suddenness of this passion can be equalled only by its violence, and the intensity of its duration.

The Princess Amelia, dressed in a robe of white watered silk, wore, like the Archduchess Sophia, the grand cordon of the imperial order of Saint Nepomucene, which had been recently sent her by the empress. A bandeau of pearls, surrounding her noble and open forehead, harmonized most exquisitely with the two large braids of magnificent ashy blond hair which bordered her cheeks, lightly tinged with red; her arms, still whiter than the waves of lace from which they escaped, were half hidden by her gloves, which did not come up to her dimpled elbow: nothing could be more graceful than her bearing, nothing prettier than her little foot, with its white satin shoe. At the moment when I saw her, her large eyes, of the purest azure, were thoughtful. I do not know whether at this moment she felt the influence of some serious idea, or whether she was deeply impressed by the grave harmony of the piece, Liszt was playing, but her half smile seemed to me to have a sweet and inexpressible melancholy; her head was slightly bent over her bosom, and she was playing mechanically with a bouquet of white violets and roses which she held in her hand. I could never express to you my feelings at that moment: all that my aunt had said to me of the ineffable goodness of the Princess Amelia came back to my mind. You may smile, my friend, but in spite of myself I felt my eyes moistening as I gazed on this thoughtful, almost sad young girl, so admirably beautiful, surrounded with honours, and so idolized by such a father as the grand-duke. Maximilian, I have often said it to you, I believe

men incapable of tasting certain kinds of happiness, which are, so to speak, too complete, too immense for his circumscribed faculties; I thing, too, that certain beings are too divinely endowed not to feel sometimes that they are alone here below, and that they feel at times vague regrets for their exquisite delicacy, which exposes them to so many deceptions, to so many chills which are unknown to less tender natures. It seemed to me that at that time the Princess Amelia felt the re-action of such a thought. Suddenly, by some strange chance, (there is a fatality about every thing here,) she mechanically turned her eyes towards the place where I was standing.

You know how scrupulously etiquette is observed by the hierarchy of rank with us. Thanks to my title and to the ties of relationship which attach me to the grand-duke, the persons in the midst of whom I had at first placed myself, had receded gradually, so that I remained decidedly in the first row, in the embrasure of the gallery door. It must undoubtedly have been this circumstance which caused the princess, as she started from her reverie, to take notice of me, for she made a slight movement of surprise, and blushed.

She had seen my portrait at the abbey, in my aunt's apartments, and she recognised me—nothing was more simple. The princess had scarcely looked at me for a second, but that look made me feel the most violent, the most profound emotion; I felt my cheeks on fire; I cast down my eyes, and remained some minutes without daring to raise them again towards the princess. When I ventured to lift them, she was talking in a low tone with the Archduchess Sophia, who appeared to listen with the most affectionate interest.

Liszt having put an interval between the two pieces he was to play, the grand-duke took advantage of those moments to express to him his admiration in the most gracious manner. The prince, as he returned to his place, perceived me, made a sign to me with the greatest kindness, and said some words to the archduchess in pointing me out to her. The latter, after having looked at me for a moment, turned towards the grand-duke, who could not help smiling as he replied to her, and spoke to his daughter. The Princess Amelia seemed to me embarrassed, for she again blushed. I was in torments; unfortunately, etiquette did not permit me to quit the spot until the concert was over. Two or three times I stole a glance at the Princess Amelia; she

seemed pensive and thoughtful: my heart was oppressed; I suffered a slight feeling of uneasiness, as if I had been the cause of the pain she felt. Undoubtedly the grand-duke had been asking her, jestingly, if she found any resemblance to the portrait of her cousin of the olden times; and in her ingenuousness, she perhaps reproached herself for not having told her father that she had before recognised me.

When the concert was over, I followed the aid-de-camp. He led me towards the grand-duke, who advanced a few steps to meet me, took me cordially by the arm, and, approaching the Archduchess Sophia, said to her, "I beg of your royal highness the permission to present to you my cousin, Prince Henry of Herkausen." "I have already met the prince at Vienna, and I am happy to see him again here," replied the archduchess, before whom I made a profound bow. "My dear Amelia," continued the prince, addressing himself to his daughter, "I present to you Prince Henry, your cousin; he is the son of Prince Paul, one of my most venerable friends, whom I much regret not to see to-day at Gerolstein." "Be so kind, sir, as to inform Prince Paul, that I share deeply in my father's regrets, for I shall always be happy to become acquainted with his friends," replied my cousin, with a simplicity full of grace. I had not before heard the sound of Princess Amelia's voice: imagine, my friend, the sweetest, the most delicious, most harmonious tones; in fine, one of those which cause the most delicate cords of the soul to vibrate. "I hope, my dear Henry, that you will remain some time with your aunt, to whom I am greatly attached," said the grand-duke, kindly to me. "Come often to see us, familiarly, in the morning, at three o'clock. If we are going out, you can join us in our walk; you know I have always loved you, because you have one of the noblest of hearts." "I do not know how to express to your royal highness my gratitude for the kind reception you condescend to bestow on me." "To prove to me your gratitude, then," said the prince, smiling, "ask your cousin for the second country dance; the first belongs of right to the archduke." "Will your highness grant me this favour?" said I to the Princess Amelia, bowing before her. "Call each other simply cousins, after the good old German custom," said the grand-duke, gaily; "ceremony is not proper among relatives." "Will my cousin do me the honour to dance this country dance with me?" "Yes, cousin," replied the Princess Amelia.

CHAPTER III.

PRINCE D'HERKAUSEN TO COUNT MAXIMILIAN.

Oldenzaal, August 25, 1843.

I CAN hardly tell you, my friends how pleased, and, at the same time, pained I was at the fatherly cordiality of the grand-duke; the confidence he testified towards me, the affectionate kindness with which he induced his daughter and myself to substitute for the formula of etiquette these family terms of a most tender intimacy, all penetrated me with gratitude; I reproach myself so much the more bitterly for the fatal attraction of a love, which ought not, or could not be agreeable to the prince. I had promised myself, it is true (and I have not failed in this resolution), never to utter a word which might lead my cousin to suspect the love that I was nourishing; but I feared that my emotion, my glances, might betray me. In spite of myself, however, this sentiment, silent and concealed as it must be, seemed guilty to me. I had time to make these reflections while the Princess Amelia was dancing the first country dance with the Archduke Stanislaus. Here, as everywhere, dancing is no more than a kind of march which follows the measure of the orchestra; nothing could show to more advantage the serious grace of my cousin's carriage. With a happiness mingled with anxiety, I awaited the moment for that conversation which the liberty of the ball would allow me to hold with her. I was sufficiently master of myself to conceal my embarrassment, as I went to seek her with the Marchioness d'Harville. Thinking of the circumstances of the portrait, I expected to see the Princess Amelia share my embarrassment. I was not mistaken; I recall our first conversation: let me relate it you, my friend: "Will your highness permit me," said I to her, "to say *my cousin*, as the grand-duke has authorized me?" "Certainly, my cousin," she kindly answered me: "I am always happy to obey my father." "And I am still more proud of this familiarity, my cousin; I have learned through my aunt to know you, that is to say, to appreciate you." "My father has also spoken to me of you, cousin, and what will perhaps astonish you," added she timidly, "I know you already, if I may say so, by sight. The lady, superior of St. Hermangilda, for whom I have the most affectionate respect, one day showed to my father and myself, a picture." "Where I was represented as a page of the sixteenth century?" "Yes,

cousin, and my father even used the little deceit of telling me that this portrait was one of our relations of the olden time, adding such kind words towards this cousin of former days, that our family must be happy to number him among our relations of the present day." "Alas! my cousin, I fear I resemble no more the moral portrait that the grand-duke designed to make of me, than I do the page of the sixteenth century." "You deceive yourself, cousin," said the princess to me, gaily; "for at the end of the concert, casting my eyes, by chance, towards the side gallery, I recognised you directly, in spite of the difference of costume." Then wishing, undoubtedly, to change a subject of conversation that embarrassed her, she said to me, "What a wonderful talent M. Liszt possesses! do you not think so?" "Wonderful. With what pleasure you listened to him!" "Because, indeed, it seems to me there is a double charm in music without words; not only as it is played with excellent execution, but we can in a moment apply our own thoughts to the melodies that we hear, and which become, so to speak, their accompaniment. I know not if you understand me cousin?" "Perfectly. Our thoughts are, then, the words that we adopt mentally to the air that we hear." "Just so, just so: you understand me," said she to me, with an expression of pleased satisfaction; "I fear I should explain but ill what I felt just now, while listening to that melody, so plaintive and so touching." "God grant, my cousin," said I to her, smiling, "that you may have no words to put to an air so sad?

Either because my question was indiscreet, and she wished to avoid answering me, or because she had not understood it, the Princess Amelia immediately said to me, pointing out the grand-duke, who, giving is arm to the Arch-duchess Sophia, was then traversing the dancing gallery. "Cousin, look at my father: How noble and fine his air! how eagerly all glances follow him! It seems to me he is more beloved even than he is revered." "Ah!" I exclaimed, "It is not only here that he is cherished. If the blessings of the people should be echoed to posterity, the name of Rodolphe of Gerolstein would be, with justice, immortal!" In speaking thus, my enthusiasm was sincere; for the dominions of the prince are, with good reason, called *the Paradise of Germany.* It is impossible to paint to you the grateful glance my cousin threw upon me, on hearing me speak in this manner. "To appreciate my father thus," said she with emotion, "is to be worthy of the attach-

ment he bears to you." "And can no one but myself love and admire him! Besides, those rare qualities, has he not the genious of kindness that makes princes adored?" "You know not how truly you speak," exclaimed the Princess, still more moved. "Ah! I know—I know it, and all those whom he governs know it as I do. They love him so much that they mourn in his sorrows, as they rejoice in his happiness; the eagerness of all to come and offer their homage to the Marchioness d'Harville, is bestowed on the choice of his royal highness, as well as the true worth of the future grand-duchess." "The Marchioness d'Harville is more worthy than any one of the attachment of my father; this is the highest praise of her I can give you." "And you can, doubtless, appreciate her justly. Have you not known her in France, my cousin?" Hardly had I uttered these last words, when some sudden thought came into the Princess Amelia's mind: she cast down her eyes, her features wore an expression of sadness, that made me silent with surprise. We were then at the end of the country-dance; when I led her back to the Marchioness d'Harville, her features were still slightly moved.

I believe that my allusion to the abode of the princess in France having recalled to her the death of her mother, created the painful impression, of which I have just spoken to you. During this evening, I remarked a circumstance which will perhaps appear to you puerile, but which has been to me a new proof of the fascination this young girl inspires in all. Her bandeau of pearls being a little deranged, the Arch-duchess Sophia, who was leaning upon her arm, was kind enough to be willing herself to replace the bijou upon her brow. Now, to one who knows the proverbial hauteur of the Arch-duchess, such an act of graciousness from her seems scarcely conceivable. Besides, the Princess Amelia, whom I was observing attentively at the moment, appeared at the same time so confused, so grateful, I might almost say, so embarrassed at this graceful attention that I thought I saw a tear sparkle in her eyes. Such, my friend, was my first evening at Gerolstein. I will now abridge: The day after this fête, I was among the very small number of persons invited to the celebration of the marriage of the grand-duke and the Marchioness d'Harville. I never saw the countenance of the Princess Amelia more radiant than during this ceremony. She gazed upon her father and the marchioness with a sort of religious ecstasy, that gave a new charm to her features; it might have been said that they reflected the ineffable

happiness of the prince and the Marchioness d'Harville. That day my cousin was very gay, very affable. I gave her my arm in a walk that we took after dinner in the palace gardens, which were magnificently illuminated. She said to me, in speaking of her father's marriage, " It seems to me that the happiness of those we cherish is yet more sweet to us than our own; for is there not always a shade of selfishness in the enjoyment of our personal happiness?" If I give you, from among a thousand, this reflection of my cousin's, my friend, it is that you may judge of the heart of this admirable creature, who possesses, like her father, the spirit of goodness. Some days after the marriage of the grand-duke, I held a long conversation with him. He asked me of the past, of my plans for the future; he gave me the wisest counsel, the most flattering encouragement; he even spoke to me of several of his plans for government, with a confidence that made me feel as proud as I was flattered; in short—shall I tell it to you? For one moment a most foolish idea crossed my mind; I fancied that the prince had imagined my love, and that he wished to study me, feel my sentiments, and perhaps lead me to an avowal. Unhappily, this mad hope did not last long; the prince brought the conversation to a close by telling me that the time for great wars had passed away; that I ought to profit by my name, my connexions, the education I had received, and the intimate friendship that had united my father and Prince M., prime minister to the emperor, and pass through the diplomatic, instead of the military career; adding, that all the questions which were decided formerly upon the battle-field, would henceforth be decided by Congress; that soon the intricate and base ancient diplomacy would give place to an enlarged and *humane* system of politics concerning the true interests of the people, who from day to day gained more knowledge of their rights; that a high, loyal, and generous spirit, might have, before many years, a noble part to play in political affairs, and might thus do much good: he proposed to me, in short, the assistance of his high patronage to facilitate me at the outset of the career in which he solicited me to embark. You understand, my friend, that if the prince had had the least design upon me, he had not made me such overtures. I thanked him for his offers with warm gratitude, adding, that I felt all the worth of his counsel, and was determined to follow it. I had at first used some reserve in my visits to the palace, but in consequence of the urgency of the grand-duke, I soon went there every day about three

o'clock. They live there in all the simplicity of our German courts. It was the life of the great castles in England, rendered still more attractive by the cordial simplicity of German manners. When the weather permitted, we took long rides; when we remained in the palace we were occupied with music. I sang with the grand-duchess and my cousin, whose voice was of unequalled sweetness and purity—such, that I could never hear it, without being moved even to the depths of my soul. At other times, we examined the wonderful collections of pictures and works of art, or the admirable library of the prince, who, you know, is one of the best-informed men in Europe: frequently I returned to dine at the palace, and on opera days I accompanied the grand-ducal family to the theatre. Every day passed like a dream: my cousin gradually came to treat me with a truly sisterly familiarity; she did not conceal from me the pleasure that she felt in seeing me; she confided to me all that interested her. Two or three times she begged me to accompany her when she went with the grand-duchess to visit the young orphans; often, also, she spoke to me of my future plans with a maturity of reason, a serious and reflective interest, that astonished me, coming from a girl of her age; she was very fond, too, of inquiring of my infancy, and of my mother, alas! ever regretted. Every time that I wrote to my father, she begged me to recall her to his rememberance; then she gave me one day for him a charming piece of tapestry, upon which she had worked for a long time. What more shall I tell you, my friend? a brother and sister, meeting again after a long separation would not have enjoyed a sweeter intimacy. Let me add, that when, by some unusual chance, we were left alone the entrance of a third could never have changed the subject, or even the accent of our conversation. You will be, perhaps, astonished, my friend, at this brotherly feeling between two young people, but the more confidence and familiarity my cousin showed me the more I watched over, and constrained myself, for fear of putting an end to this adorable familiarity. And then, what increased still more my reserve, the princess showed, in her intercourse with me, so much frankness, so much noble confidence, and especially so little coquetry, that I am almost certain that she has always been ignorant of my violent passion, though there remains a slight doubt upon this subject, arising from a circumstance that I will relate to you immediately.

If this brotherly intercourse could have lasted, perhaps this happiness might have been sufficient for me; but even

while I was enjoying this, I reflected that my service, on the new career in which the prince was inducing me to engage, would soon call me to Vienna or abroad; I reflected, in short, that presently, perhaps, the grand-duke would think of marrying his daughter in a manner worthy of her. These thoughts became the more painful to me as the moment of my departure approached. My cousin soon observed the change that was at work in me. The evening before the day I left her, she told me that for a long time she had found me gloomy and abstracted. I endeavoured to elude her questions; I attributed my sadness to a vague ennui. "I cannot believe you," said she to me: "my father treats you almost as a son; everybody loves you; to be unhappy would be ingratitude." "Ah, well!" said I to her, without being able to conquer my emotion, "it is not ennui; it is grief—yes, a penetrating grief that I feel." "And why? What has happened to you?" she asked me, with interest. "Just now my cousin, you told me that your father treated me as a son; that here everybody loved me. Ah! well, before long I must renounce these attachments: I must leave Gerolstein, and this thought fills me with despair." "And the remembrance of those that are dear to us—is this, then, nothing, my cousin?" "Ah, yes—but years, but events bring so many unforeseen changes!" "There are at least attachments which are not changed; such as my father has always shown you. What I feel for you is of this kind, you know well; we are brother and sister; never to forget one another," added she, raising towards me her large blue eyes, filled with tears. This glance overwhelmed me; I was on the point of betraying myself; fortunately, I restrained my feelings. "It is true, that feeling lasts," said I to her, in an embarrassed manner; "but circumstances alter. For instance, my cousin, when in a few years I shall return, do you think that this intimacy, I value so fully, may yet continue?" "Why should it not continue?" "Because you will then be, undoubtedly, married, my cousin—you will have other duties; and you will have forgotten your poor brother." • • • • • •

I swear to you, my friend, I said no more to her. I know not if she saw in these words an avowal which was displeasing to her, or whether she, like myself, was sadly struck by the inevitable changes that the future must necessarily make in our intercourse; but, instead of answering me, she remained a moment silent, overwhelmed; then rising suddenly, her countenance pale

and disordered, she went out, after examining some embroidery by the young Countess d'Oppenheim, one of her ladies of honour, who was working in the embrasure of one of the windows of the saloon where our conversation took place. The evening of this day I received a new letter from my father, which recalled me suddenly here. The next morning I went to take leave of the grand-duke; he told me that my cousin was a little un-well, that I might entrust to him my last words to her; he pressed me to his heart, like a father, regretting, my sudden departure, and especially that this departure was occasioned by anxiety; then recalling to me, with the greatest kindness, his counsel on the subject of the new career which he begged me to embrace immediately, he added, that on my return from my embassies, or on my leaves of absence, he should see me again at Gerolstein with warm pleasure.

Happily, on my arrival here, I found the state of my father a little improved; he still keeps his bed, but his health no longer gives me any serious anxiety. Unfortunately, he has already noticed my depression, several times; but he has supplicated me in vain to confide to him the cause of my melancholy. I should not dare to do it, notwithstanding his blind tenderness for me; you know his severity as regards every thing which appears to him wanting in frankness. Yesterday, when alone by his side, believing him asleep, I could not restrain my tears, as I thought of my happy days at Gerolstein. He saw me weep, for he soon awaked while I was absorbed in my grief: he questioned me with the most touching kindness. I attributed my sadnes to the anxiety that his health had caused me, but he was not deceived by this evasion.

Now that you know all, my good Maximilian, say, is not my fate forlorn enough? What shall I do—what resolve? • •

Ah, my friend, I cannot tell you my anguish. What is to happen, my God! All is utterly lost! I am the most wretched of men if my father does not renounce his project. I will tell what has happened: just now I had finished this letter, when, to my great astonishment, my father, whom I believed in bed, entered my cabinet, where I was writing to you; he saw upon my desk my four first pages all filled; I was at the end of this last. "To whom do you write so at length?" he asked me, smiling. "To Maximilian, father." "Oh!" said he to me, with an expression of affectionate reproach, "I know that he possesses your confidence en-

tirely; *he is very happy—he!*" He pronounced these last words so sadly, in such a wounded tone, that, touched by his accent, I replied, giving him my letter, almost without reflection. "Read, father."

My friend, he has read all. Do you know what he said to me, after remaining for some time thoughtful? "Henry, I am going to write to the grand-duke all that passed during your stay at Gerolstein." "My father, I conjure you, do not do it." "Is what you relate to Maximilian perfectly true?" "Yes, my father!" "In this case, your conduct has been upright. The prince will appreciate it. But in future you should not show yourself unworthy of his confidence; you would do so if, abusing his offer, you should return hereafter to Gerolstein, with the intention, perhaps, of making yourself beloved by his daughter." "My father, could you think—?" "I think that you love with passion, and that passion is, sooner or later, an evil counsellor." "How, my father? you will write to the prince that—" "That you love your cousin desperately." "In the name of Heaven, my father, I supplicate you, do nothing of this!" "Do you love your cousin?" "I love her to idolatry; but—" My father interrupted me. "If this is the case, I shall write to the grand-duke to demand for you the hand of his daughter." "But, my father, such a claim is madness for me!" "It is true; nevertheless, I ought frankly to make this demand of the prince, representing to him the reasons that led me to this step. He has received you with the most true hospitality, he has shown you fatherly kindness; it would be unworthy of me and you to deceive him. I know the greatness of his soul? he will feel that I am dealing as an honest man; if he refuse to give you his daughter, and this is almost unquestionable, he will know at least that in future, if you should return to Gerolstein, you ought to be no more on the same intimacy with her. You have shown me, my child," added my father, kindly, "the letter that you have written to Maximilian. I am now informed of every thing; it is my *duty* to write to the grand-duke, and I am going to do so this very moment." You know, my friend, that my father is the best of men, but he has an inflexible tenacity of will when the question is what regards his *duty;* judge of my anguish, my terror. Though the step he is going to take, may be, after all, frank and honourable, it does not trouble me less. How will the grand-duke receive this mad offer? Will he not be displeased with it? and will not the Princess Ame-

lia be as much wounded that I have allowed my father to take such a step without her consent?

Ah, my friend, pity me, I know not what to think. It seems as though I were looking upon an abyss, and that a dizziness were coming over me.

I finish in haste this long letter; I shall write to you soon. Yet once more pity me, for, in truth, I fear I shall become crazy if the fever that excites me last longer. Adieu, adieu! Yours from my heart, for ever, HENRY D'H.

We now conduct the reader to the palace of Gerolstein, where Fleur de Marie had dwelt since her return from France.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PRINCESS AMELIA.

THE appartment occupied by Fleur de Marie (we shall call her the princess Amelia only officially,) in the grand-ducal palace, had been furnished, by Rodolphe's care, with extreme taste and elegance. From the balcony of the young girls' oratory, could be seen, in the distance, the two towers of the Convent of St. Hermangilda, which, rising above immense masses of verdure, were themselves commanded by a high, wooded mountain, at the foot of which the abbey stood. On a beautiful morning in summer, Fleur de Marie was allowing her glances to wander over this splended landscape. Her hair was dressed, but she wore a white toilette dress, with narrow blue stripes; a large neckerchief of plain cambric falling upon her shoulders, left visible the two ends and the knot of a little silk cravat, of the same blue as the girdle of her dress. Seated in a large chair, made of carved ebony and and cramoisie velvet, her elbow supported by one arm of this seat, she supported her cheek upon the back of her small white hand. The languishing attitude of Fleur de Marie, her paleness, the fixedness of her gaze, the bitterness of her half-smile, revealed a deep melancholy.

After some moments, a heavy, sad sigh relieved her breast. Then letting her hand which supported her cheek fall again, she bent her head farther upon her breast. You would have said that the wretched girl was bending beneath the weight of some heavy misfortune. At this moment a woman of mature age with a grave and distinguished air, dressed with elegant simplicity, entered the oratory, almost timidly, and coughed slightly, to attract the at-

tention of Fleur de Marie. Arousing herself from her reverie, she raised her head quickly, and said, saluting her with a motion full of grace. "What do you wish, my dear countess?" "I come to inform your highness that my lord begs you to await him; he will meet you here in a few minutes," replied Princess Amelia's maid of honour, with respectful formality. "I was wondering that I had not yet saluted my father to-day; I wait his visit each morning with so much impatience! But I hope that I do not owe to any illness of Mademoiselle Harneim the pleasure of seeing you, my dear countess, at the palace two days in succession?" "Let your highness feel no uneasiness on that point, Mademoiselle Harneim has begged me to take her place to-day; to-morrow she will have the honour of resuming her service near your highness, who will perhaps excuse the change."

"Certainly, for I shall lose nothing by it; after having had the pleasure of seeing you two days in succession, my dear countess, I shall have for two other days Mademoiselle Harneim with me." "Your highness honours us," replied the lady of honour, bending again; this kindness encourages me to ask a favour?" "Speak, speak; you know my eagerness to be of assistance to you." "It is true your highness has accustomed me to your goodness; but this regards a subject so painful, that I should not have the courage to enter upon it, if it did not concern a very deserving object; for this reason I dare to depend upon the extreme indulgence of your highness." "You have no need of my indulgence, my dear countess; I am always very grateful for every occasion of doing a little good."

"This concerns a poor creature who, unfortunately, had quitted Gerolstein before your highness had established that charitable institution, so useful for orphan or forsaken girls." "And what has happened to her? what do you beg for her?"

"Her father, a very adventurous man, went to seek his fortune in America, leaving his wife and daughter to a precarious mode of existence. The mother died; the daughter, hardly sixteen years old, quitted the country to follow to Vienna a seducer, who soon forsook her. Then, as always happens, the first step in the path of vice led to an abyss of infamy; in a short time this girl became the opprobrium of her sex." Fleur de Marie cast down her eyes, blushed, and could not conceal a slight shudder, which did not escape the maid of honour. Fearing to have wounded the chaste susceptibility of the princess by conversing with her upon such a

topic, she continued, with embarrassment: "I ask a thousand pardons of your royal highness; I have undoubtedly offended you by drawing your attention to so polluted a being; but the miserable being shows so sincere a repentance, that I thought I could solicit for her a little pity." "And you are right. Go on, I pray you," said Fleur de Marie, conquering her sad emotion; "indeed all errors are worthy of pity, when repentance follows them." "And that is the case here, as I have remarked to your highness. After two years of this abominable life, grace touched this abandoned one. A prey to a late remorse, she has returned here. On her arrival here, she was lodged at a house belonging to a worthy widow, whose gentleness and piety are well known. Encouraged by the goodness of the widow, the poor creature has confessed her faults, adding that she felt a just horror for the past life, and that she would purchase, at the price of the most severe penance, the happiness of entering a religious house, where she might expiate her errors and deserve their redemption. The worthy widow knowing that I had the honour to serve your highness, has written to me to recommend this unfortunate, who, by means of the all-powerful agency of your highness with the princess Juliana, lady superior of the abbey, might hope to enter the Convent of St. Hermangilda as lay sister; she asks as a favour, to be employed in the most painful labours, that her penance may be more meritorious. I have several times desired to converse with this woman before allowing myself to implore for her the pity of your highness, and I am firmly convinced that her repentance will be lasting. It is neither want nor age that has brought her to be truly good; she is scarcely eighteen years old; she is yet very beautiful, and possesses a small sum of money, that she wishes to devote to a charitable object if she obtains the favour that she solicits." "I will take charge of your protegé," said Fleur de Marie, restraining with difficulty her emotion, so much resemblance did her past life offer to that of the unfortunate one in whose favour she was solicited; she added, "the repentance of this miserable is too praiseworthy to be left without encouragement." "I know not how to express my gratitude to your highness. I hardly dared hope you would deign to be so charitably interested in such a creature." "She has been guilty—she repents," said Fleur de Marie, with an accent of commiseration and inexpressible sadness; "it is right to nourish pity for her. The more sincere her remorse, the more painful must it be, my dear countess."

"I hear my lord, I believe," said the maid of honour, suddenly, without remarking the deep increasing emotion of Fleur de Marie. In fact, Rodolphe was entering a saloon which opened into the oratory, holding in his hand an enormous bunch of roses. At the sight of the prince, the countess discreetly retired. Hardly had she disappeared, when Fleur de Marie threw herself upon her father's neck, resting her forehead upon his shoulder, and remained thus some seconds without speaking. "Good-morning, good-morning, my dear child," said Rodolphe, pressing his daughter to his breast with feeling, without yet observing her sadness. "See this thicket of roses; what a fine harvest I have made for you this morning; it was this which prevented me coming sooner; I hope that I have never brought you a more magnificent bouquet. Take it."

And the prince, still holding his bouquet in his hand, moved backwards gently, to disengage his daughter from his arms and look at her; but seeing her burst into tears, he threw the bouquet upon a table, took Fleur de Marie's hands in his, and exclaimed: "You weep; my God! what is the matter?" "Nothing, nothing, my dear father," said Fleur de Marie, drying her tears, and endeavouring to smile upon Rodolphe. "Tell me, I beg of you, what is the matter? What can have made you sad?" "I assure you, father, it is nothing to distress you. The countess has just solicited my interest for a poor woman, so interesting, so unhappy, that in spite of myself I am moved by her recital." "Truly? is it only this?" "It is only this," answered Fleur de Marie, taking from a table the flowers that Rodolphe had thrown there; "but how you spoil me," added she; "what a magnificent bouquet, and when I think that each day, you bring me such, gathered by yourself." "My child," said Rodolphe, gazing upon his daughter with anxiety, "you conceal something from me; your smile is sad—constrained. Tell me, I beg of you. what distresses you? do not occupy yourself with this bouquet," "Ah! you know this bouquet is my joy every morning; and then I love roses so much. You remember," added she, with an affecting smile, "you remember my poor little rose-bush. I have always kept its remains." At this painful allusion to the past, Rodolphe exclaimed—"Unhappy child! Are my suspicions founded? In the midst of the splendour that surrounds you, would you yet sometimes think of that horrible time? Alas! I had thought to have made you forget it by tenderness." "Par-

don, pardon, father! these words escaped me. I make you sad." "I am myself sad, poor angel," said Rodolphe sorrowfully, "because these returns to the past must be fearful to you—because they would poison your life if you were weak enough to abandon yourself to them." "Father, this was by chance. Since our arrival here, this is the first time—" "This is the first time you have spoken of it—yes; but, perhaps, this is not the first time that these thoughts have troubled you. I have perceived your melancholy, and sometimes I have accused the past, as causing your sadness. But, as I was uncertain, I dared not even attempt to show you the uselessness, the injustice of these remembrances; for, if your grief had arisen from another cause, if the past had been to you what it ought to be, a vain, bad dream, I should risk awakening in you painful ideas that I should wish to destroy." "How good you are! how these fears show me your infallible tenderness!"

"What do you mean! My position was so difficult, so delicate. On another occasion I said nothing, but I was ever thinking of what concerned you. By contracting this marriage, which crowned all my desires, I also hoped to give another guarantee to your repose. I knew too well the excessive delicacy of your heart to hope that you could ever cease to think of the past; but I said to myself, that you ought, feeling yourself cherished as a daughter by the noble woman who knew and loved you in the depth of your misfortunes—you ought, I say, to regard the past as sufficiently expiated, and be indulgent, or rather, just towards yourself; for, indeed, my wife is entitled by her high qualities to the respect of all—is it not so? Ah! well; since you are to her a daughter, a cherished sister, ought you not to be encouraged? Is not her tender attachment an entire redemption? Does it not tell you that she knows, as I do, that you have been a victim, that you are not guilty; that others can indeed, reproach you only with misfortune, that has overwhelmed you from your birth?"

"My father—"

"Ah! let me tell you all my thoughts, since an accident, for which indeed we ought to be grateful, has caused this conversation. For a long time I have desired, and at the same time dreaded it. God will that it may have a salutary result. It was mine to make you forget so many dreadful sorrows, I have a mission to fulfil towards you so august, so sacred, that I should have had the courage to sacrifice for your repose my love for Madame d'Har-

ville, my friendship for Murphy, if I had thought their presence would have recalled too bitterly the past." "Oh! my good father, could you think so? Their presence, the presence of those that know *what I was*, and who yet love me tenderly, does it not, on the contrary, personify forgetfulness and pardon? Indeed, my father, would not my whole life have been made desolate, had you renounced for me your marriage with Madame d'Harville." "Ah! I should not have been the only one to desire this sacrifice, if it would secure your happiness. You know not what self-denial Clemence had already voluntarily imposed upon herself, for she also comprehends all the extent of my duty to you." "Your duty to me; my God! And what have I done to merit so much?" "What have you done, my poor dear angel! Until the moment you were restored to me, your life was only bitterness, misery, desolation; and for your past sufferings I reproached myself as if I had caused them. And when I see you smiling, pleased, I believed myself pardoned; my only aim, my only wish is to render you as entirely happy as you have been unfortunate; to raise you as much as you have been lowered, for it seems to me the last traces of the past are effaced when the most eminent, the most honourable persons pay you the respect which is due to you." "Respect to me? no, no, my father; but to my rank, or, rather to that you have given me." "Ah! it is not rank that is loved, that is revered—it is you, understand; indeed, my dear child, it is yourself alone. There is a homage imposed by rank, but there is another imposed by powers of attraction. You know not how to distinguish between these, because you know not yourself; because you know not that, by a wonderful intelligence and tact, which renders me proud of you, you carry into all ceremonious intercourse, so new to you, an union of dignity, modesty, and grace, which is irresistible to the most stately characters." "You love me so much, my father, and all love you so much, that every one is sure of pleasing you by showing me deference." "Ah! the wicked child!" exclaimed Rodolphe, interrupting his daughter, and embracing her tenderly; "what a wicked child, who will not grant a single satisfaction to my fatherly pride!" "Is not this pride sufficiently satisfied by attributing to you the good feeling that is shown me, my good father?" "No, indeed, mademoiselle," said the prince, smiling, to his daughter, to chase away the sadness with which he still saw her affected, "no, mademoiselle, it is not the same thing; for it is not

allowable for me to be proud of myself, and I can and ought to be proud of you. And again, you know not how divinely you are endowed; for fifteen months your education has become so complete, that the most difficult mother would be satisfied with you, and this education has increased still more the almost irresistible influence that you spread around you without being yourself aware of it." "My father, your praises confuse me." "I speak the truth, nothing but the truth. Let us speak boldly of the past; it is an enemy that I wish to fight hand to hand; we must look it in the face. Do you not, then, remember La Louve, that courageous woman who saved you? Recal that prison scene which you have related to me; a crowd of prisoners, more hardened indeed than wicked, were bent upon tormenting one of their companions, their drudge; you appear, you speak, and immediately these furies, blushing for their base cruelty, show themselves as charitable as they were wicked. Is this, then, nothing? Again, is it not owing to you that La Louve has felt repentance, and desired an honest and laborious life? Ah! believe me, my dear child, that which conquered La Louve, and her turbulent companions, merely by the ascendency of goodness, combined with a rare elevation of mind; this, although in other circumstances and in an utterly different sphere, must, by the same charm, fascinate the stately Archduchess Sophia and all the circle of my court; for the good and wicked, great and small, submit almost always to the influence of higher, nobler spirits. I do not wish to say that you were *born a princess* in the aristocratic sense of the word; that would be a poor flattery to make you my child; but you are of that small number of privileged beings who are born to speak to a queen as to charm her, and to earn her love, and also to speak to a poor, debased, and abandoned creature so as to make her better, to console her, and thus gain her adoration." "But, my dear father, I beg—" "Ah! it is so much the worse for you, mademoiselle, that it is so long since my heart has poured forth. Think, with my fear of awakening in you the remembrances of the past which I wish to annihilate, I dared not converse to you of these comparisons, these parallels, which render you so admirable in my eyes. How many times have Clemence and I been enraptured with you! How many times, moved so that the tears rose in her eyes, has she said to me, 'Is it not wonderful that this child should be what she is, after misfortune has so persued her?' or, rather, would Clemence continue, 'is it not wonderful that,

far from impairing that noble and rare nature, misfortune has on the contrary, given a higher range to what was excellent in her.' "

At this moment the door opened, and Clemence, grand-duchess of Gerolstein, entered, holding a letter in her hand. "Here, my friend," said she to Rodolphe, "is a letter from France. I wished to bring it to you, that I might say good morning to my indolent child, whom I have not seen this morning," added Clemence, embracing Fleur de Marie tenderly. "This letter comes just at the right moment," said Rodolphe, gaily, after having read it through. "We were talking just now of the past; of that monster that we must incessantly combat, my dear Clemence, for it threatens the repose and the happiness of our dear child." "Is this true, my friend? those attacks of melancholy which we have observed—" "Have no other cause than wicked remembrances; but fortunately, we now know our enemy, and we will triumph over it." "But from whom, then, is this letter, my friend?" asked Clemence. "From the pretty Rigolette, the wife of Germain." "Rigolette!" exclaimed Fleur de Marie; what happiness to hear from her!" "My friend," said Clemence, aside to Rodolphe, at the same time glancing at Fleur de Marie, "do you not fear that this letter may recal to her painful recollections?" "These are those very remembrances I wish to put an end to, my dear Clemence; we must approach them boldly, and I am sure that I shall find in Rigolette's letter excellent arms against them, for this excellent little creature adored our child. And Rodolphe read aloud the following letter:—

"*Boqueval Farm, August* 15, 1841.

My Lord—I take the liberty of writing to you again to make you a sharer of a great happiness which has befallen us, and to ask of you a new favour—of you, to whom we already owe so many, or rather, to whom we owe the perfect paradise in which we live; I, my Germain, and his good mother. This is the cause, my lord; for ten days I have been mad with joy, for it is ten days since I have possessed the love of a little girl; I fancy that she is the very picture of Germain; the fact is, she has charming blue eyes like Germain, and black hair, curly, like mine. Just now, contrary to his custom, my husband is unjust; he wishes to have our little one always upon his knees, while it is my right, is it not, my lord? "Fine, worthy young persons!

they ought to be happy," said Rodolphe. "If ever a couple were well matched, it is this." "And Rigolette deserves her happiness," said Fleur de Marie. "I have always blessed the good fortune that caused me to meet them," said Rodolphe. And he continued—But, indeed, my lord, pardon my burdening you with these little family quarrels that end always with a kiss. Certainly your ears must tingle well, my lord, for there does not pass a day that we do not say, looking at each other, we two, Germain and I, 'How happy we are! O God, how happy we are!' and naturally your name follows after these words. Excuse the scrawl, my lord, and the blot; I had written without thinking, Monsieur Rodolphe, as I used to say, and I have scratched it out. I hope, by the way, that you will find my writing has improved much, as well as my orthography, for Germain always shows me how, and I no longer make great blots stretching all across, as when you made my pens. "I must confess," said Rodolphe, laughing, "that my protegé is under a slight illusion, I am sure that Germain is occupied rather with kissing the hand of his pupil than directing it." "Come, come, my friend, you are right," said Clemence, looking at the letter, "the writing is a little large, but very legible." "In truth, there is some progress," said Rodolphe; "formerly it would have taken eight pages to contain what she writes now in two." And he continued. It is, however, true that you have made pens for me, my lord; when we think of it, we are quite ashamed, in recalling how far from proud you were. Ah, my God! here again do I find myself speaking to you of something besides what we wish to ask you, my lord; for my husband unites with me, we have formed a plan. You shall hear. We supplicate you, then, my lord, to have the goodness to choose and give us a name for our dear girl; it is agreed upon with the godfather and godmother, and do you know who they are, my lord? Two persons whom you and her ladyship, the Marchioness d'Harville, have raised from misery to render happy—happy as we are. In a word, they are Morel, the jeweller, and Jeanne Duport, the sister of a poor prisoner named Pique-Vinaigre, a worthy woman whom I saw in prison when I went to visit my poor Germain there, and whom, afterwards, her ladyship brought out from the hospital. Now, my lord, you must know why we have chosen M. Morel for godfather, and Jeanne Duport for godmother. We said one to another, we, Germain and I, this will be a way of thanking M.

Rodolphe again for his kindness, by taking for godfather and godmother of our little girl worthy people who owe everything to him and to the marchioness, without taking into consideration that Morel the jeweller, and Jeanne Duport are the cream of honest people. They are of our class, and besides, as Germain and I say, they are *our kindred in happiness*, they are like us, *of the family of your proteges*, my lord. "Ah, my father, has not this idea a charming delicacy," said Fleur de Marie, with emotion, "to take as godfather and godmother of their child those who owe everything to you and my second mother?" "You are right, my dear child," said Clemence; "I am most deeply touched by this token." "And I am very glad that I have so well bestowed my benefits," said Rodolphe, continuing to read. Besides, with the aid of the money you have given him, Monsieur Rodolphe, Morel is now dealer in precious stones; he gains something to bring up his family upon. The good and poor Louise will, I think, marry a worthy labourer, who loves and respects her, as he should, for she has been unfortunate, but not guilty, and the betrothed of Louise has heart enough to understand this. "I was very certain," exclaimed Rodolphe, addressing his daughter, "of finding in this dear little Rigolette's letter, arms against our enemy! You hear it is the expression of plain common sense of this honest and upright soul. She says of Louise, '*She has been unfortunate, but not guilty, and her betrothed has heart enough to understand this.*'" Fleur de Marie more and more moved and saddened by the reading of this letter, trembled at the glance that her father fixed upon her, for a moment, as he pronounced the last words. The prince continued. I will tell you also, my lord, that Jeanne Duport, through the generosity of the marchioness, has been separated from her husband, that wicked man who ate her out of every thing, and beat her; she has taken her eldest daughter with her, and she keeps a little lace shop; their trade prospers. There is nowhere such happy people; and thanks to whom? thanks to you, my lord, to the marchioness, who both know how to give so much, and to give to so good a purpose. By-the-way, Germain will write to you as usual, my lord, at the end of the month, on the subject of the *bank for labourers out of employment, and of gratuitous loans*. The reimbursements are seldom behindhand, and we perceive already much good that it spreads in this quarter. Now, at least, poor families can get through the dull season

for work without pawning their linen and beds. Then when work returns, you should see with what spirit they put themselves to it; they are so proud that confidence is placed in their work and their probity! Besides, how they bless you for having lent them the wherewithal. Yes, my lord, they bless you; *you*; for, although you say you have done nothing in its institution but to nominate Germain for head cashier, and that it is an unknown who has done this good work, we like better to believe that it is to you we owe it; it is more natural. Besides, there is a famous trumpet to repeat on every occasion that it is you we should bless; this trumpet is Madame Pipelet, who repeats to every one that it is only her *king of all tenants* (excuse me, Monsieur Rodolphe, she always call you so) who can have done this charitable work, and *her old dear* Alfred is of her opinion. As to him, he is so proud and pleased with his office of director of the bank, that he says that the employment of M. Cabrion would be nothing to him. To end your family of protegés, my lord, I will add that Germain has read in the papers that Martial, a planter in Algiers, had been spoken of with great praise for the courage he had shown in repulsing, at the head of his farmers, an attack of thievish Arabs, and that his wife, as intrepid as himself, had been slightly wounded in the side while she was discharging her gun like a real grenadier. From that time, they say in the papers she has been called 'Madame Carabine.' Excuse this long letter, my lord, but I thought you would not be sorry to hear from us concerning those whose good Providence you have been. I write you from the farm at Boqueval, where we have been since the spring with our good mother. Germain leaves every morning for his business, and he returns at night. In the autumn we shall go back to live in Paris. How strange it is, Monsieur Rodolphe, I, who never loved the country, adore it now. I make it clear to myself; it is because Germain loves it so much. Speaking of the farm, Monsieur Rodolphe, you, who undoubtedly know where that good little Goualeuse is, if you have an opportunity, tell her how we always remember her as one of the sweetest and best beings in the world; and that, as to myself, I never think of our happiness without saying to myself, since M. Rodolphe was also the M. Rodolphe of that dear Fleur de Marie, through his care she must be as happy as we are; and this makes my happiness yet more perfect. My God! my God! how I talk! What will you say to me, my lord? But, ah, you

are so good. And then, you see, it is your fault if I chatter as much and as joyously as Papa Cretu and Ramonette, who no longer dare to rival me in singing. Indeed, Monsieur Rodolphe, I can tell you, I put it into their teeth. You will not refuse us one request, will you, my lord? If you give a name to our dear little child, it seems to us it will bring her good fortune, it will be like a happy star for her. If I close by telling you, Monsieur Rodolphe, that we endeavour to aid poor people here and there, according to our means, it is not to boast of ourselves, but that you may know we do not keep to ourselves alone all the happiness you have given us; besides, we always say to those we succour, 'It is not we that you must thank and bless, it is M. Rodolphe, the best, the most generous man there is in the world;' and they take you for a kind of *saint*, if nothing more. Adieu, my lord, believe me, when our little girl shall begin to spell, the first word she shall read will be your name, Monsieur Rodolphe; and afterwards, those words you caused to be written upon my trousseau,

"Labour and wisdom; honour and happiness."

With the help of these four words, our tenderness and our care, we hope, my lord, that our child, will be always worthy to speak the name of him who has been our good Providence, and that of all the wretched ones he has known. Pardon, my lord, for finishing thus; I have such large tears in my eyes; they are good tears; excuse, if you please; it is not my fault; but I cannot see clearly, so that I write badly. I have the honour, my lord, to salute you with as much respect as gratitude.

"RIGOLETTE, wife of Germain.

"P.S. Ah, my God! my lord, in reading over my letter, I perceive that I have very often written *Monsieur Rodolphe*. You will pardon me? I may hope so. You know well that under one name or another, we respect you the same, my lord.'"

CHAPTER V.

THE PRINCESS AMELIA.

"DEAR little Rigolette," said Clemence, softened by the letter which Rodolphe had just read. "This simple epistle is full of sensibility." "Undoubtedly," replied Rodolphe, "a benefit was never better bestowed. Our protegé has a heart of gold, and

our dear child appreciates her as we do," added he, addressing his daughter. Then, struck, with her paleness and emotion, he cried, "But what is the matter?" "Alas! what a sad contrast between my position and that of Rigolette. Work and wisdom; honour and happiness; these four tell all that has happened to her. A laborious and sensible daughter, a beloved wife, a happy mother, an honoured woman; such is her destiny; while I—" "Great God! what do you say?" "Pardon, my good father; do not accuse me of ingratitude, but, notwithstanding your ineffable tenderness, notwithstanding that of my second mother, notwithstanding your sovereign power, and the respect and splendour with which I am surrounded, my shame is incurable. Nothing can annihilate the past. Once more, pardon me, my father; I have until now concealed it from you, but the remembrance of my former degradation throws me into despair; it kills me." "Clemence, do you hear her?" cried Rodolphe, in despair. "But, my poor child," said Clemence, taking affectionately the hands of Fleur de Marie in her own, "our tenderness, the affection of those that surround you, and which you so well merit, does not all this prove to you that the past should only be to you a vain and bad dream?" "Oh, fatality, fatality," resumed Rodolphe. "Now I curse my fears, my silence; that sad idea, so long rooted in her mind, has made there, unknown to us, dreadful ravages and it is too late to contend against this deplorable error. Alas! how unfortunate I am!" "Courage, my good friend," said Clemence to Rodolphe: "you just now said it is better to know the enemy which threatens us. We now know the cause of our dear child's sorrow; we shall triumph over it, because we shall have reason, justice, and tenderness on our side." "And then, at last, because she will see that her affection, if it were incurable, would render ours incurable also," replied Rodolphe, "for, in truth, it would be to despair of all justice human and divine, if this poor child had only a change of sufferings." After a silence of some moments, during which Fleur de Marie appeared to be collecting herself, she took with one hand that of Rodolphe, with the other that of Clemence, and said to them with a voice expressive of deep emotion, "Listen to me, my good father, and you also, my tender mother; this day is a solemn one; God has granted, and I thank him for it, that it should be impossible to me to conceal from you any longer what I feel. In a little time, I should, in any event, have made

to you the confession you are now about to hear, for all suffering has an end, and concealed as mine has been, I should not have been able to keep silence to you much longer." "Ah, I understand all," cried Rodolphe; there is no longer any hope for her." "I hope for the future, my father, and this hope gives me strength to speak to you thus." "And what can you hope for the future, my poor child, since your present fate causes you only grief and bitterness?" "I am going to tell you, my father, but, before all, permit me to recall the past to you, to own to you, before God who hears me, what I have felt up to this time."

"Speak, speak, we hear you," said Rodolphe, seating himself with Clemence near Fleur de Marie. "While I remained at Paris, near you, my father," said Fleur de Marie, "I was so completely happy, that those delicious days might atone for years of suffering. You see I have at least known what happiness is." "During some days perhaps." "Yes, but what pure felicity! Love surrounded me then, as ever, with the tenderest care. I gave myself up to the emotions of gratitude and affection to you. The future dazzled me; a father to adore, a second mother to love doubly, for she had taken the place of one I had never known—I must own my pride was excited. When the few persons of your household, who at Paris called me 'your highness,' I could not prevent myself from being proud. If I thought then, at times, vaguely of the past, it was to say to myself, 'I, formerly so humble, so miserable, am enjoying all the splendours of luxury, and of an almost royal existence.' Alas! my fortune was so unforeseen, your power surrounded me with such splendid eclat, that I was excusable perhaps in allowing myself to become so blinded."

"Excusable! nothing was more natural, my poor beloved angel: what wrong was there in being proud of a rank which was your own? At that time I recollect you were delightfully gay; how many times have I seen you fall into my arms as if overpowered with happiness, and heard you say to me with an enchanting accent, 'My father, it is too much, too much happiness.' Unfortunately, since then I have not been alarmed enough at the cause of your melancholy." "But tell us, then, my child," asked Clemence, "who has changed into sadness this pure joy which you first felt?" "Alas! a very sad and entirely unforeseen circumstance." "What circumstance?" "You recollect, my father," said Fleur de Marie, without being able to conquer a shudder

of horror; "you remember the sad scene which preceded our departure from Paris, near the barrier?"

"Yes," replied Rodolphe sadly. "The brave Chourineur, after having again saved my life, died there before us, saying, '*Heaven is just: I have killed! they kill me.*'" "Ah, well, my father, when this unfortunate man was expiring, do you know whom I saw looking intently at me? Oh, that look, that look, it has pursued me ever since," added Fleur de Marie, shuddering.

"What look? of whom do you speak?" cried Rodolphe. "Of the *Ogresse of the Tapis Franc*," murmured Fleur de Marie. "That monster, have you seen her again? and where?" "You did not perceive her in the tavern where the Chourineur breathed his last. She was among the women who surrounded him." "Ah, now," said Rodolphe, dejectedly, "I understand: you thought there was something providential in this dreadful meeting." "It is but too true, my father. At the sight of the Ogresse I felt a mortal shudder. It seemed to me that, my heart, until then radiant with happiness and hope, was suddenly frozen. Yes, to meet this woman at the moment when the Chourineur was dying, and repeating the words '*Heaven is just*,' this seemed to me a providential reproof of my proud forgetfulness of the past, which I ought to expiate by humiliation and repentance." "But the past was laid upon you: you can answer for it before God. You were constrained, intoxicated, unfortunate child. Once precipitated in spite of yourself, in this abyss, you could not leave it notwithstanding your remorse, your terror, your despair; the chance which placed you in my path could alone have dragged you from it. And then, my child, as your father has told you, you were the victim, not the accomplice, of this infamy," cried Clemence.

"But this infamy, I have submitted to it, my mother," sadly rejoined Fleur de Marie; "nothing can annihilate these horrible recollections. They pursue me incessantly, they pursue me even to this palace, peopled with the elite of Germany. They pursue me even to the arms of my father, even to the steps of his throne." Fleur de Marie melted into tears. Rodolphe and Clemence remained mute before this frightful expression of an invincible remorse. They, too, wept, for they felt the powerlessness of their consolations. "Since then," resumed Fleur de Marie, drying her tears, "at every moment of the day I say to myself, with a bitter shame, 'I am honoured, revered; the most eminent persons surround me with respect; the sister of an emperor has deigned to

Fleur de Marie at Court.

fasten the bandeau upon my head; and I have lived in the mud of the cité—have been spoken to familiarly by thieves and assassins!' Oh, my father! pardon me; but the more my position is elevated, the more I am struck with the degredation into which I had fallen. Think of it, oh, my God! after having been what *I have been*, to suffer old men to bow before me—to suffer, noble young women, who feel themselves flattered to approach me—to suffer, finally, that princesses, doubly august by their age and by their sacerdotal character, should heap upon me favours and praises—is not this impious and sacrilegious? And then, if you knew, my father, what I have suffered—what I still suffer every day, in saying, 'If it should please God the past should be known, with what merited scorn would she be treated who is now elevated so high.

"But, unfortunate child, my wife and I—we know the past, we are worthy of our rank, and yet we love—we adore you." "You have for me the blind tenderness of a father and mother." "And all the good you have done since your abode here—this beautiful, holy institution, this asylum opened by you to poor abandoned girls—the intelligence and devotion with which you watch over them—is this nothing to atone for faults which were not your own? Finally, the affection which is shown for you by the worthy abbess of Saint Hermanglida, do you not owe it altogether to the elevation of your mind, to the beauty of your soul, to your sincere piety?"

"While the praises from the abbess of Saint Hermanglida are addressed only to my present conduct, I enjoy them without scruple, my father; but when she quotes my example to the noble ladies in the abbey—I am ready to die of confusion, as if I were the accomplice of a wicked falsehood." After a long silence, Rodolphe resumed, with deep dejection. "I see—I despair of pursuading you: reason is weak when opposed to a conviction, the more firm because it has its source in a generous and elevated sentiment. Since every moment you throw back a look on the past, the contrast must be, indeed, a continual punishment to you. Pardon me in turn, my poor child."

"You, my good father—you ask pardon of me, and for what? Good Heaven!" "For not having foreseen your susceptibility From the exceeding delicacy of your heart, I ought to have divined it; and yet, what could I do? It was my duty solemnly to acknowledge you as my daughter. Yes: but I was wrong in one

point. I have been too proud of you—I ought to have hidden my treasure—to have lived almost in retirement with Clemence and you; I should have renounced these fêtes at which I loved so much to see you shine, thinking, foolishly, to elevate you so high that the past would disappear entirely from your eyes. But alas! the reverse has taken place. Yet once again, it is my fault. I meant, however, to do right;" said Rodolphe, drying his tears. "But I was mistaken; and then I supposed myself pardoned too soon. The vengeance of God was not satisfied: it still pursues me in the unhappiness of my daughter!" A discreet knock at the door of the saloon which adjoined the oratory of Fleur de Marie interrupted this sad conversation. Rodolphe rose, and half opened the door. He saw Murphy, who said, "I ask pardon of your royal highness for disturbing you, but a courier from Prince Herkausen Oldenzaal has just brought a letter, which, he says is very important to your royal highness." "Thank yon, my good Murphy; do not go away," said Rodolphe with a sigh; "I shall want to talk with you." And the prince, having shut the door, remained in the saloon, to read the letter. It was in these words:

My Lord,

May I hope that the ties of relationship which attach me to your royal highness and the friendship with which you have always deigned to honour me, will excuse me for a proceeding which might be considered very rash, if it were not imposed by the conscience of an honest man.

It is fifteen months, my lord, since you returned from France, bringing with you a daughter, so much the more beloved because you had thought her for ever lost, while, on the contrary, she had never quitted her mother, whom you married at Paris *in extremis*, in order to legitimatize the birth of the Princess Amelia, who is thus equal of the other princesses of the Germanic Confederation. Her birth is, then, sovereign, her beauty is incomparable, her heart is as worthy of her birth as her mind is worthy of her beauty, as my sister, the Abbess of Saint Hermangilda, has written me. The abbess, as you know, has often the honour of seeing this well-beloved daughter of your royal highness. During the time which my son passed at Gerolstein he saw, almost every day the Princess Amelia; he loves her desperately, but he has always concealed this passion. I have thought it my duty, my lord, to inform you of this circumstance. You have

deigned, as a father, to receive my son, and have invited him to the bosom of your family, and to live in that intimacy which was so precious to him. I should fail in loyalty to your highness if I dissimulated a circumstance which modified the reception which was reserved for my son.

I know that it would be madness in us to dare to hope to ally ourselves more nearly to the family of your royal highness. I know that the daughter of whom you have so good a right to be proud, may aspire to a higher destiny. But I know, also, that you are the most tender of fathers, and that if you ever judged my son worthy of belonging to you, and of contributing to the happiness of the Princess Amelia, you would not be deterred by the grave disproportion which places such a fortune beyond out hopes. I dare not, and I cannot say more to you, my lord; my emotion is too profound.

Whatever may be your determination, believe me that we shall submit to it with respect, and that I shall be always faithful to the sentiments of the most profound devotion with which I have the honour to be,

Your royal highness' most humble and obedient servant,

GUSTAVUS PAUL,
Prince of Herkausen Oldenzaal.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PRINCESS AMELIA.

AFTER reading the letter of the prince, the father of Henry, Rodolphe remained for some time sad and thoughtful; he returned to his daughter on whom Clemence was vainly lavishing the most tender consolations.

"My child, you have yourself said it was God's will that this day should be one of solemn explanations," said Rodolphe to Fleur de Marie; "I did not anticipate a new and grave circumstance which was to justify your words." "To what does it refer, my father?"

"My friend, what is it?" "New causes of fear!" "For you?" "For me." "You have confessed to us but half your troubles, my poor child." "Be so kind as to explain yourself, my father," said Fleur de Marie, blushing. "Now I can do it; I could not sooner, not knowing how much you despaired of your

fate. Listen, my beloved! When, at the begining of our conversation, you spoke to me of the hopes which remained to you, I understood—my heart was broken, for I was to part with you forever—that I was to see you shut yourself up in a cloister—to see you descend to a living tomb. Is it your wish to enter a convent!" "My father!" "My child, is this true?" "Yes, if you will permit me to do it," replied Fleur de Marie, with a stifled voice. "Leave us!" cried Clemence. "The Abbey of Saint Hermangilda is very near Gerolstein. I shall see you very often." "Do you consider that such vows are eternal, my dear child? you are only eighteen years old, and perhaps some day—" "Oh! I shall never repent the resolution. I shall never find repose and forgetfulness but in the solitude of the cloister, if you, my dear father, and you my second mother, continue your affection to me." "The duties, the consolations of the religious life might, indeed," said Rodolphe, "if they could not heal, at least calm the sorrows of your poor depressed and distracted spirits. And though half the happiness of my life is the forfeit, I may perhaps, approve your resolution. I know what you suffer, and I do not say that renouncing the world may not be the fatally logical end of your sorrowful existence." "What, you also, Rodolphe," cried Clmence. "Permit me, my friend, to express all my thoughts," replied Rodolphe. Then addressing his daughter, "But before taking this last determination, we must examine if there may not be other prospects for the future, more agreeable to your wishes and ours. In this case, I should not regard any sacrifice, if I could secure you such a future existence." Fleur de Marie and Clemence made a movement of surprise. Rodolphe continued, fixing his eyes on his daughter, "What do you think of your cousin Henry?" After a moment of hesitation she threw herself weeping into the arms of the prince. "You love him, my poor child?" "You never asked me, my father," replied Fleur de Marie, drying her tears. "My friend, we were not deceived," said Clemence. "So you love him," added Rodolphe, taking his daughter's hands in his own, "You love him well, my dear child?" "Oh! if you knew," replied Fleur de Marie, "how much it cost me to hide from you the sentiment as soon as I discovered it in my heart; alas, at the least question from you I should have owned everything. But shame restrained me, and would always have restrained me."

"And do you think that Henry knows your love for him?" said

Rodolphe. "Great God! my father, I do not think so," cried Fleur de Marie, in terror. "And he, do you think he loves you?" "No, my father, no; oh, I hope not; he will suffer too much." "And how did this love come, my beloved angel?" "Alas, almost without my knowing it; you remember the picture of the page?" "Which is in the apartment of the Abbess of Saint Hermangilda; it was Henry's portrait."

"Yes dear father, believing this to be a painting of another age, one day in your presence, I did not conceal from the superior that I was struck with the beauty of this portrait. From that day, I often took pleasure in recalling this portrait, and that without the least scruple, believing that it belonged to one of my cousins long since dead. Little by little I habituated myself to these gentle thoughts, knowing that it was not permitted me to love on this earth," added Fleur de Marie with a heart-rending expression, and her tears bursting forth anew. "I gave these romantic reveries a sort of melancholy interest. I looked upon the pretty page of the past time as a lover beyond the grave, whom I should perhaps one day meet in eternity. But pardon me these sad, and childish imaginations."

"Nothing can be more touching, on the contrary, poor child," said Clemence. "Now," replied Rodolphe, "I understand why you one day reproached me with an air of chagrin for having deceived you about the picture." "Alas, yes, dear father. Judge of my confusion when, afterwards, the superior informed me that this picture was that of her nephew, one of our relations. Unfortunately, yet, I often hear you, dear father, praising the heart, the mind, the character of Prince Henry." "You already loved him, my dear child, even when you had as yet seen only his portrait, and heard of his rare qualities!" "Without loving him, I felt towards him an attraction, for which I bitterly reproached myself. But I consoled myself by thinking that no one in the world would know this sad secret, which covered me with shame in my own eyes. To dare to love me, and then not to be contented with your tenderness and that of my second mother! Did I not owe to you enough to employ all my strength, all the resources of my heart in loving you both? Oh, believe me, among the reproaches I made myself, these last were the most painful. Finally, I saw my cousin for the first time, at that grand fête you gave to the Archduchess Sophia. The same evening, dear father, you presented my cousin, authorized between us the intimacy which

our relationship permitted." "And soon you loved each other?" "Ah, my father, he expressed his respect, his attachment, his admiration with so much eloquence; you had yourself told me so much good of him." "He deserved it; there is not a more elevated character; there is not a better or a braver heart." "Your pardon, dear father, do not praise him so much; I am already so unhappy." "And I must convince you of all the rare qualities of your cousin. What I say surprises you; I understand it my child—go on." "I felt the danger that I incurred in seeing Prince Henry every day, and yet I could not withdraw myself from the danger. Notwithstanding my blind confidence in you, dear father, I dared not express my fears to you. I directed all my courage to concealing my love; however, I own to you, dear father, notwithstanding my remorse, often in this fraternal intimacy of every day, forgetting the past, I felt gleams of happiness till then unknown to me, but followed soon, alas! by dark despair, when I again fell under the influence of my sad recollections. For, alas! if they pursued me in the midst of the homage and respect of persons almost indifferent to me, judge, my dear father, of my tortures when Prince Henry lavished on me the most delicate praises, followed me with such frank and pious adoration; putting, as he said, the brotherly attachment that he felt for me under the holy protection of his mother, whom he lost when he was very young. I endeavoured to merit this sweet name of sister, which he bestowed upon me, by advising my cousin respecting his future prospects, according to my weak knowledge: by interesting myself in all which related to him; by promising always to ask of you such assistance for him as you might be able to give. But often, alas! what torments have I felt, how have I restrained my tears when, by chance, Prince Henry interrogated me about my infancy, my early youth. Oh! to deceive—always to deceive, always to fear, always to lie, always to tremble, before the inexorable look of one's judge. Oh! my father, I was guilty, I know it; I had no right to love; but I expiated this sad love by many bitter sorrows. What shall I say to you? The departure of Prince Henry, in causing me a new and violent chagrin, enlightened me; I saw that I loved him more than I imagined. Thus," added Fleur de Marie, with deep dejection, as if this confession had exhausted her strength, "I should have soon made you this avowal, for this fatal love has filled up the measure of my sufferings. Say, now that you know all, my father, is there any future prospect for

me but that of the cloister?" "There is another, my child; yes, and this future is as sweet, as smiling, as happy, as the other is dark and gloomy." "What do you say, dear father?" "Hear me, in my turn. You must feel that my tenderness is too clear-sighted, to have allowed your love and that of Henry to have escaped me; at the end of a few days I was certain that he loved you, more even, than you loved him." "My father, no, no, it is impossible; he does not love me at this time." "He loves you, I tell you, he loves you passionately, to madness, almost." "Oh! my God! my God!" "Listen my daughter. When I told you that pleasantry about the picture I did not know that Henry was about to visit his aunt at Gerolstein. When he came, I invited him to come to see us often. I had before always treated him like my son; I changed in no degree my manner towards him. At the end of some days, Clemence and myself no longer doubted the regard you felt for each other. If your position was painful, my poor child, mine was not less so, it was extremely delicate. As a father, knowing the rare and excellent qualities of Henry, I could not but be profoundly happy at your attachment, for I could never have dreamed of a husband more worthy of you." "Ah! dear father, pity, pity!" "But, as a man of honour, I thought of the sad past life of my child. Thus, far from encouraging the hopes of Henry, I gave him in several conversations, advice absolutely contrary to what he would have expected from me if I had thought of giving him your hand. In such a situation, it was incumbent on me to keep a rigorous neutrality, not to encourage the love of your cousin, but to treat him with the same affability as formerly. You have been hitherto so unhappy, my beloved child, that seeing you, so to speak, reviving under the impulse of this noble and pure love, I could not for anything in the world have deprived you of its divine and rare joys. The father of Henry, Prince Paul, has just written to me—here is his letter." "Oh, my God my God!" said Fleur de Marie, hiding her face in her hands, "I might have been so happy!" "Courage, my well-beloved daughter; if you wish it, this happiness is yours," cried Rodolphe tenderly. "Oh! never, never; do you forget?" "I forget nothing; but if to-morrow you enter the convent, not only I lose you for ever, but you quit me for a life of austerity and tears. Ah! well! to lose you: let me at least know that you are happy, and married to the man you love and who adores you." "Married to him! Me, dear father!" "Yes; but on the condition that, immedi-

ately after your marriage, contracted here at night, without other witnesses than Murphy for you and Baron de Graün for Henry, you shall both go to some tranquil retreat in Switzerland or Italy, to live unknown as wealthy citizens. Now, my beloved daughter, do you know why I resign myself to a seperation from you? Why I desire Henry to quit his title when he is out of Germany. It is because I am sure that in the midst of happiness, a concentrated in an existence deprived of all display, little by little you will forget this odious past, which forms such a bitter contrast to the ceremonious homage with which you are surrounded." "Rodolphe is right," cried Clemence: "alone, with Henry, you will no longer have time to think, my dear child, of your former sorrows." "Then as it will be impossible for me to be long without seeing you, every year Clemence and I will go to visit you." "And some day, when the wonnd of which you suffer, shall be healed, when you shall have fonnd forgetfulness in happiness, you will return to us, never to leave us."

"Forgetfulness in happiness," murmured Fleur de Marie, who, was soothed by this enchanting vision.

"Yes, yes my child," replied Clemence, "when at every moment of the day you see yourself blessed, respected, adored by the husband of your choice, shall you have leisure to think of the past, and even if you should, why should it sadden you? why prevent you from believing in the felicity of your husband?" "Finally, it is true, for tell me, my child," replied Rodolphe, "adored by your husband, when you shall have the knowledge and the proof of the happiness which he owes to you, what reproaches can you make yourself."

"My father," said Fleur de Marie, forgetting the past for this ineffable hope, "can so much happiness reserved for me?" "Ah I ams ure of it," cried Rodolphe, in an ecstasy of triumphant joy; "is there a father who can restore happiness to an adored child?" "She merits so much that we ought to be heard," said Clemence, sharing the transport of her husband. "To marry Henry, and some day to pass my life between him, my second mother, and my father," replied Fleur de Marie, yielding to the sweet intoxication of her thoughts. "Yes, we shall all be happy. I will reply to Henry's father that I consent to the marriage," cried Rodolphe, pressing Fleur de Marie in his arms with an indescribable emotion. "Take courage, our separation will be short; the new duties which your marriage will impose upon you will confirm you,

still more in that felicity, for finally, if you should once day be a mother, it would not be only for yourself that you should be happy." "Ah!" cried Fleur de Marie, with a heart-rending cry, for this word *mother*! awoke her from the enchanting dream which was lulling her. "Mother? me? Oh! never! I am unworthy, I should die with shame before my child, if I had not died with shame before its father in making him the avowal of the past." "What does she say, gracious Heaven!" cried Rodolphe, stunned by the abrupt change. "I a mother!" resumed Fleur de Marie, with bitter despair. "Oh, never! miserable fool that I was to allow myself to be drawn away to hope."

"My daughter, listen to me in pity." Fleur de Marie stood upright, pale and beautiful, in the majesty of incurable misfortune. "My father, we forget that before marrying me, Prince Henry must know my past life." "I have not forgotten it," cried Rodolphe. "He must know all, he shall know all." "And would you not rather see me die than see me so degraded in his eyes?" "But he shall also know what an irresistible fatality plunged you into the abyss. He shall know your restoration." "And he will finally feel," replied Clemence, pressing Fleur de Marie in her arms, "that when I call you my daughter, he may without shame call you his wife."

"And I, my mother, I love Prince Henry too much ever to give him a hand which has been touched by the bandits of the cité." * * * * * * *

A short time after this sad scene, the official Gazette of Gerolstein contained the following announcement:—

"Yesterday took place, at the Grand-ducal Abbey of Saint Hermangilda, in presence of the reigning grand-duke and all the court, the taking of the veil by the very high and very powerful princess, her Royal Highness Amelia of Gerolstein.

"The novitiate was received by the most illustrious and most reverend Lord Charles Maximilian, archbishop duke of Oppenheim; Lord Annibal Andre Montano, of the Princes of Delpha, Bishop of Ceuta, apostolic nuncio, gave the salutation and the papal benediction.

"The sermon was pronounced by the most Reverend Lord Peter d'Ansfeld, canon of the Chapter of Cologne, Count of the holy Roman Empire."

CHAPTER VII.

THE PROFESSION.

RODOLPHE TO CLEMENCE.

Gerolstein, January 12, 1842.

In assuring me to-day of the complete restoration of your father's health, my dear friend, you give me reason to hope that you can, by the end of the week, bring him back here. I foresaw that in the residence at Rosenfeld, situated in the midst of forests, he would be exposed, to the severity of cold; unfortunately, his passion for hunting rendered our advice useless. I conjure you, Clemence, as soon as your father can bear the motion of the carriage, to quit that wild country and dwelling, only habitable for those poor Germans whose iron race has disappeared.

Clemence, I beg of you, be not imprudent. I know how anxiously you will attend your father; but he will be as much in despair as myself if your health should be impaired by this journey. I deplore doubly the illness of the count, for it takes you from me at a moment when I could have drawn deeply ftom the fountain of consolation of your tenderness. The ceremony of the *profession* of our poor child is fixed for to-morrow—to-morrow, the 13th of *January*, fatal epoch. It was upon the *thirteenth of January* that I drew the sword against my father. Ah! my friend, I too soon thought myself forgiven. The intoxicating hope of passing my life with you and my daughter, made me forget that my punishment was still to come. And it did come—when, six months since, the unhappy one unveiled to us the double torment of her heart: *her incurable shame at the past, added to her unhappy love for Henry.* These two bitter and burning sensations, the one heightened by the other, by a fatal logic, caused her to take up the unconquerable resolution to take the veil. You know, my dear friend, how, in combating this design with all the strength of our admiration for her, we could not deny that her worthy and courageous conduct would have been ours. How could we answer those terrible words?

I love Prince Henry too well to give him a hand which has been touched by the bandits of the city.

She was obliged to sacrifice herself to the ineffaceable remembrance of her shame; she has done it valiantly; she has renounced the splendours of the world; she has descended from the steps

of a throne to kneel, in sackcloth, upon the pavement; she crossed her hands upon her breast, bowed her angelic head, and her beautiful fair locks, which I loved so much, fell, cut off by the sharp iron. Oh! my friend, you know our heart-rending emotion. In writing these words to you, I weep like a child. * * *

I have seen her this morning; although she seemed to me less pale than usual, and declares she does not suffer, her health makes me anxious. Alas! when I see her attenuated features, which have the cold whiteness of marble, I cannot help dreaming over the pure splendour with which she sparkled at our marriage. Our happiness seemed to radiate from her beautiful countenance. As I told you, I saw her this morning; she has not been informed that the Princess Juliana voluntarily resigns in her favour the dignity of abbess; to-morrow, therefore on the day of her *profession*, our child will be elected abbess, as there is an unanimous desire among the noble ladies of the community to confer upon her this dignity. Since the beginning of her novitiate, there as been but one opinion upon her piety, her charity, her religions exactness in fulfilling all the duties of her order, whose austerities she exaggerates most unfortunately. She has exercised in this convent the influence which she exercises everywhere without attempting to do so.

Her conversation this morning confirmed my doubts. She has not found in the solitude of the cloister, repose and forgetfulness. She congratulated herself, however, upon her resolution, which she considers the accomplishment of an imperious duty; but she is not formed for those mystical contemplations, in the midst of which, certain people, forgetting all affection, all earthly remembrances, are lost in ascetic delights. No; Fleur de Marie submits herself to the rigorous and harsh observance of her order; she pours out the most evangelical consolations, the most humble cares upon the poor sick women in the hospital of the abbey. She has even refused the assistance of a lay sister for the moderate care of that cold and bare cell, where we remarked with such sad astonishment, you remember, my dear friend, the dried branches of *her little rosebush*, suspended beneath her crucifix. But she confessed to me this morning, while bitterly reproaching herself for this weakness, that she is not so much absorbed by the duties and austerities of a religious life as to prevent the past from constantly appearing before her, not only as it was, but as it might have been. "I blame myself for it, my father," said

she to me, with that calm and gentle resignation which you know belongs to her, "I blame myself, but I cannot help often thinking that if God had spared me the degradation which has withered for ever my future life, I might have lived always near you, beloved by the husband of your choice. In vain I pray to God to free me from these frightful recollections, to fill my heart alone with love to him with holy hopes; in short, to take me entirely to himself, since I wish to give myself entirely to him. He does not grant my prayers—undoubtedly because earthly thoughts render me unworthy to enter into communion with him." "But then," cried I, seized with a foolish glimmering of hope "there is still time—to-day your novitiate ends; you are still free —renounce this austere life, which does not afford you the consolation you expected; if you must suffer, come and suffer in our arms. let our tenderness assuage your sorrows."

Shaking sadly her head, she answered me with that inflexible justness of reasoning which has so often struck us, "It is true, my dear father, the solitude of the cloister is sad for me. It is true, I am pursued with bitter regrets and grievous recollections; but, at least, I have the consciousness of fulfilling a duty; I know, that everywhere but here I should be out of place; I should again be in that cruelly false position in which I have already suffered so much—for I, too, am proud. Your daughter shall be such as she ought to be; shall do what she ought to do; shall suffer what she ought to suffer. To-morrow all will know from what a slough you have rescued me: in seeing me repentant at the foot of the cross, they will, perhaps, pardon the past in consideration of my humility. It would not be so, my dear father, if they saw me, as a few months ago, shining in the midst of the splendours of your court. I am grateful to God when I think that *He alone* can offer to your daughter an asylum worthy of her and of you: a position, in short, which shall not form a sad contrast to my former degradation, and in which I can deserve the only respect which is due to me, that which is granted to repentance and sincere humility."

Alas! Clemence, what could I reply to that? Fatality! fatality! for this unfortunate child is endowed, so to speak, with an inexorable *logic* in all that concerns the sensitiveness of the heart and one's honour. I left her, as usual, with a breaking heart. Without founding the least hope upon this interview, which will be the last before her *profession*, I said to myself, "To-

day she might renounce the cloister." But you see, my dear friend, her will is irrevocable, and I must indeed agree with her, and repeat her words:

"*God alone can offer her an asylum and a position worthy of her and of me.*"

Once more, her resolution is admirably logical, and suited to the position in society in which we are placed. With Fleur de Marie's exquisite sensibility, no other condition was possible for her. But I have often told you, my friend, if sacred duties, did not detain me in the midst of a people who love me, and to whom I stand, in a slight degree, in the place of Providence, I should go away with you, my daughter, Henry, and Murphy, to live obscurely in some unknown retreat. Then, far from the imperious laws of a society which is powerless to cure the evils it has caused, we might have forced this unhappy child into happiness and forgetfulness. While here, in the midst of splendour, of ceremony, it was impossible. But still, once more, fatality! fatality! I cannot abdicate my power without compromising the happiness of this people, who rely upon me. Brave and worthy people! how little do they know how much their happiness costs me! Adieu, a tender adieu, my beloved Clemence. It is a consolation to me to see you as afflicted as myself at the fate of my child, for thus I can say *our* sorrow, and there is no egotism in my suffering. Sometimes I ask myself, what would have become of me without you, in the midst of such grievous circumstances? Often these thoughts make me still more sad at Fleur de Marie's fate; for you remain to me.—But for her, who is there? Adieu, a sad adieu, my noble friend, good angel of unhappy days. Come back soon: this absence weighs upon you as well as me.

My life and love to you; soul and heart to you! R.

I send you this letter by a courier: in case of any unexpected change, I will despatch another immediately after the sad ceremony. I forgot to give you intelligence of poor Henry; his state of health is better, and no longer gives us such anxiety. His excellent father, himself ill, has recovered strength to take care of Henry, to watch over him; a miracle of paternal love—which does not astonish us.

Thus, my dear friend, to-morrow — to-morrow—fatal and unpropitious day for me.

Yours for ever. R.

Abbey of St. Hermangilda, 4 o'clock in the morning.

Calm yourself, dear Clemence, calm yourself; although the hour in which I write this letter, and the place whence it is dated, might alarm you. Thanks to God, the danger is past, but the crisis was terrible.

Yesterday, after having written to you, agitated by a fatal presentiment, in recalling to myself the paleness and appearance of suffering in my daughter, the state of weakness in which she had languished for some time, remembering, in short, that she was to pass in prayer, in a large, icy-cold church, almost all the night before her profession, I sent Murphy and David to the abbey to ask the Princess Juliana to permit them to remain, until to-morrow, in the outer house which Henry usually inhabited. Thus, my daughter could have prompt assistance, and I could have intelligence, if as I feared, strength should fail her to accomplish this rigorous, I will not say cruel, obligation to remain a January night in prayer in the excessive cold. I had also written to Fleur de Marie, that while I respected the exercise of her religious duties, I begged her to take care of her health, and to pass the evening in her cell, and not in the church. This is the letter she sent in reply:

'My dear father, I thank you deeply, and with all my heart, for this new and tender proof of your interest; have no anxiety, I believe I am in the way of accomplishing my duty. Your daughter, my dear father, can show neither fear nor weakness. Such are the rules; I must conform to them. If some physical suffering result from it, with joy do I offer them to God! You will approve it, I hope; you, who have always practised renunciation and duty with so much courage. Adieu, my dear father. I will not say I am going to pray for you. When I pray to God, I always pray for you, for it is impossible to prevent mingling you with the Divinity I implore; you have been to me on earth what God, if I deserve it, will be to me in heaven. Deign this evening to bless in thought your daughter, my dear father. To-morrow she will be the spouse of the Lord. She kisses your hand with pious respect.

SISTER AMELIA.'

This letter re-assured me, however, but little; I, too, must pass a sad evening. Night having come, I went to the pavilion which I have had built not far from the monument erected to my father's memory, in expiation of that fatal night. Towards one o'clock in the morning, I heard Murphy's voice; I shudd ered

with alarm! he had come in haste from the convent. How shall I tell you, my friend? As I had foreseen, the unfortunate child, notwithstanding her courage and strong will, had not strength to accomplish the barbarous custom, which it had been impossible for the Princess Juliana to dispense with, as the rules on this subject were precise. At eight o'clock in the evening, Fleur de Marie kneeled on the stone pavement in the church. Until midnight she continued praying. But at this hour, overcome by her weakness, cold, and emotion, for she wept long and silently, she fainted. Two nuns, who had watched with her, took her up, and carried her to her cell. David was immediately called. Murphy came in a carriage to seek me; I flew to the convent; I was received by the Princess Juliana. She told me that David feared the sight of me would make too great an impression upon my daughter; that her fainting, from which she had recovered, presented nothing very alarming, having been only caused by great weakness. I feared they wished to hide from me some great misfortune, or, at least to prepare me to hear it; but the superior said to me, "I assure you, my lord, the Princess Amelia is out of danger; a simple cordial which Dr. David has given her has restored her strength."

I could not doubt what the abbess affirmed; I believed her, and awaited intelligence from my daughter with sad impatience. At the end of a quarter of an hour David returned. Thanks to God, she was better; she had desired to continue her prayers in the church, consenting only to kneel upon a cushion. And as I resisted, and was indignant that the superior should have granted her request, adding that I formally opposed myself to it, he replied that it would have been dangerous to contradict the wishes of my daughter at a time when she was under the influence of a strong nervous emotion; and, besides, he had agreed with the Princess Juliana that the poor child should quit the church at the hour of matins to take a little repose.

"She is now in church, then," said I to him. "Yes, my lord, but in half an hour she will have quitted it." I caused myself to be conducted to the north gallery, from which the whole choir of the church can be seen. There, in the midst of the darkness, only illuminated by the pale light of the lamp from the chancel, I saw her on her knees, her hands joined, and praying with fervour. I also knelt, and thought of my child. Three o'clock struck; two sisters who were seated, but who had not moved

their eyes from her, went and whispered to her. In a few moments she made a sign, got up, and crossed the church with a firm step; when she passed under the lamp, her countenance appeared as white as the long veil which floated around her. I also went out of the gallery, intending at first to go to meet her, but I feared a new emotion would prevent her from taking a few moments repose. I sent David to learn how she was; he came back to tell me she felt better, and intended to try to sleep a little.

I remain at the abbey, for the ceremony which will take place to-morrow.

I think now, my friend, it is useless to send you this incomplete letter. I shall finish it to-morrow by relating the events of that sad day. Until then farewell, my friend. I am worn out with grief. Pity me."

CHAPTER LAST.

THE THIRTEENTH OF JANUARY.

Rodolphe to Clemence.

THIRTEENTH OF JANUARY—an anniversary now doubly dreadful!!!

My friend, we are losing her for ever! Listen to the story! It is, then, true, there is an atrocious voluptuousness in relating a horrible grief. Yesterday I bewailed your detention from me. To-day, Clemence, I congratulate myself that you are not here; you would suffer too much. This morning, I was roused by the sound of the bells; I groaned with terror; It seemed to me funereal, a funeral knell. In fact, my daughter is dead to us, Clemence, from this day you must begin to mourn for her in your heart, so filled with maternal affection. Is our child buried under the tomb, or under the vaults of a cloister—for us what is the difference? From this day, Clemence, we must regard her as dead. Besides, her health, impaired by so much sorrow, by so many shocks, is so feeble. Why not that other death, still more complete? Fate is not weary. And then, after my letter of yesterday, you may understand that it would, perhaps, be more happy for her if she were dead. DEAD! These four letters have a singular appearance, do you not think so? when one writes them in reference to an idolized daughter—a daughter so fair, so charming—of such angelic goodness. * * * * *

At noon her profession took place with solemn pomp. Hidden behind the curtains of our gallery, I was present at it. I felt, over again, but with still more intensity, all those poignant emotions which we suffered at her novitiate. A singular thing, it is generally believed that she is drawn towards a religious life by an irresistible vocation; her profession might be looked upon as a happy event, and yet, on the contrary, an overpowering sadness weighs down the whole assembly. At the bottom of the church, among the people, I saw two under-officers of my guard, two old rude soldiers, hold down their heads and weep. Sad presentiment. If there were foundation for it, it has been but half realized. The profession terminated—our child was brought back into the hall of the chapter, where the nomination of the new abbess was to take place. I went into this hall to await the return of Fleur de Marie. She soon entered. Her emotion, her weakness was so great, that two sisters supported her. I was alarmed, less even by her paleness and the deep alteration of her features, than by the expression of her smile; it seemed to me marked by a sort of secret satisfaction. Clemence, I say it to you, perhaps, soon we shall need all our courage—much courage—I *feel*, so to speak, *within me*, that our child is struck with death.

After all, her life would be so unhappy. This idea is horrible; but if sorrow must strike us, it is better to be prepared. To prepare one's self for such a misfortune, is to taste beforehand that slow anguish—it is refinement of grief. It is a thousand times more dreadful than to have the blow fall unexpectedly. But the customs of compassion prescribe to us a *preparation*. Thus be alarmed, if you observe that I speak of *her* with the delicacy, the caution of desperate sadness, after having announced to you that I do not feel serious inquietude respecting her health. Yes, be alarmed if I speak to you as I am writing down, for though I left her, to finish this letter, an hour ago, in a tolerably calm state, I repeat it to you, Clemence, *I feel within me* that she suffers more than she appears to do. Heaven grant that I deceive myself, and that I take for presentiments the despairing sadness which this melancholy ceremony inspires.

Fleur de Marie then entered the large hall of the chapel. All the stalls were occupied by the nuns. She went modestly to take the lowest place on the left, supporting herself on the arm of one of the sisters, for she still seemed very weak. At the upper end of the hall the Princess Juliana was seated, the grand prioress beside

her; on the other hand a second dignitary, holding in her hand the golden cross, the symbol of the authority of the abbess. A profound silence prevailed. The princess arose, took her cross in her hand, and said, with a serious tone, and an expression of much emotion.

"My dear daughters, my great age obliges me to confide to younger hands this emblem of my spiritual power. I am authorized to do it by a bull of our holy father; I will present then, to the benediction of my Lord Archbishop of Oppenheim, and to the approbation of his royal highness the grand-duke, our sovereign, and to yours, my dear daughters, the one whom you have designated to succeed me. Our grand prioress will make known to you the result of the election, and to the person whom you shall have elected I will deliver up my cross and ring." I never moved my eyes from my daughter. Standing in her stall, her hands crossed on her bosom, her eyes cast down, half enveloped in her white veil, and the long folds of her black robe, she remained immovable; she had never supposed that she could be chosen: her elevation had been only confided to me by the abbess.

The grand prioress took a register and read:—"Each of our dear sisters having been, according to rule, invited, eight days since, to place their votes in the hands of our holy mother, and mutually to keep secret their choice until this moment, in the name of our holy mother, I declare, that one of you, my dear sisters, has, by her exemplary piety, by her evangelical virtues, merited the unanimous suffrage of the community; and this is our Sister Amelia, during her lifetime the most high and puissant Princess of Gerolstein." At these words, a sort of murmur of sweet surprise and happy satisfaction passed round the hall; the looks of all the nuns were fixed upon my daughter, with an expression of tender sympathy. Notwithstanding my all-engrossing anxieties, I was myself deeply moved with this nomination, which, made separately and secretly, offered, nevertheless, a touching unanimity. Fleur de Marie, astounded, became still more pale; her knees trembled so much, that she was obliged to support herself with one hand on the side of the stall. The abbess spoke again, with a very clear, but grave voice.—"My dear daughters, is it indeed Sister Amelia whom you consider most worthy and most deserving of all of you? Is it indeed she whom you acknowledge as your spiritual superior? Let each of you in turn answer me, my dear daughters." And each nun answered, in a loud tone, "I

have voluntarily and freely chosen, and I do choose Sister Amelia for my holy mother and superior." Overpowered by an inexpressible emotion, my poor child fell on her knees, joined her hands, and so remained till every vote was given.

Then the abbess, placing the cross and ring in the hands of the grand prioress, advanced towards my daughter to take her by the hand and lead her to the seat of the abbess. * * *

My friend, my tender friend, I have interrupted myself a moment. I must take courage and finish the relation of this heart-rending scene. "Raise yourself, my dear daughter," said the abbess to her; "come and take the place which belongs to you; your virtues, and not your rank, have gained it for you." Saying these words, the venerable princess bent towards my daughter to assist her to rise. Fleur de Marie took a few trembling steps, then arriving in the middle of the hall of the chapter, she stopped and said in a calm and firm voice, "Pardon me, holy mother, I would speak to my sisters." "Ascend first, my dear daughter, your seat as abbess," said the princess; "That place, holy mother, cannot be mine," replied Fleur de Marie, with a low and trembling voice. "What do you say, my dear daughter?" "Such a high dignity is not made for me, holy mother." "But the voices of all your sisters call you to it." "Permit me, holy mother, to make here on my knees a solemn confession; my sisters will see and you also holy mother, that the most humble condition is not humble enough for me." "Your modesty misleads you, my dear daughter," said the superior, with kindness; believing that the unfortunate child was yielding to a feeling of exaggerated modesty; but I, I divined those confessions which Fleur de Marie was about to make. Seized with horror, I cried out with a supplicating voice, "My child, I conjure you—" At these words, to tell you my friend, all that I read in the look which Fleur de Marie cast upon me, would be impossible. She had understood that I should partake in the shame of this horrible revelation: she understood that, after such a revelation I might be accused of falsehood for I had always left it to be believed that Fleur de Marie had never left her mother. At this thought, the poor child believed herself guilty of the blackest ingratitude towards me. She had not strength to go on—she was silent, and held down her head from exhaustion. "Yet once again, my dear daughter,' resumed the abbess, "your modesty deceives you: the unanimity of your sisters" choice proves how worthy you are to take my place. If you have

taken part in the pleasures of the world, your renouncing these pleasures is but the more meritorious. It is not her Royal Highness Princess Amelia who is chosen—it is *Sister Amelia*. For us your life began when you entered this house of the Lord, and it is this example and holy life which we recompense. I say to you, moreover, my dear daughter, that if before entering this retreat your life had been as guilty as it has been, on the contrary pure and praiseworthy, that the angelic virtues of which you have given us the example since your abode here, would expiate and redeem, in the eyes of the Lord, any past life, however guilty it may have been." These words of the abbess, were the more precious to Fleur de Marie, inasmuch as she believed the past ineffaceable. This scene had deeply distressed her, and though she affected calmness, it seemed to me that her countenance changed in an alarming manner. Twice she groaned as she passed her poor emaciated hand over her forehead.

"I think I have convinced you, my dear daughter," resumed the Princess Juliana, "you would not cause your sisters a severe pain by refusing this mark of their confidence and their affection "No, holy mother," said she, with an expression which struck me, and with a voice becoming weaker "I *now* think I may accept it. But as I feel fatigued, and ill, if you will permit it, holy mother, the ceremony of my consecration shall not take place for a few days." "It shall be as you desire, my dear daughter; but while we wait till your office shall be blessed and consecrated, take this ring: come to your place: our dear sisters will render you their homage, according to the rules." I saw at every moment her emotion increasing, finally, this scene was beyond her strength; she fainted before the procession of the sisters was finished. We carried her into the apartment of the abbess. David had not left the convent; he hastened and bestowed the first cares upon her. Oh that he may not have deceived me; he assures me that this new accident was caused only by extreme weakness, occasioned by the fastings, fatigues, and the privation of sleep, which my daughter has imposed upon herself during her novitiate. I believed him, because, in fact, her angelic features, though of a frightful paleness, did not betray any suffering; when she recovered her consciousness, I was even struck with the serenity which shone on her forehead. It seems to me that she was concealing the secret hope of an approaching deliverance.

The superior having returned to the chapter to close the ses-

sion, I remained alone with my daughter. "My good father, can you forget my ingratitude? At the moment I was about to make this painful confession, you asked me to spare you." "Oh, do not speak of it, I supplicate you." "And I had not dreamed," continued she, with bitterness, "that in saying in the face of all, from what an abyss of degradation you had brought me; it was to accuse you publicly, of a dissimulation to which you had resigned yourself only to secure to me a brilliant and honoured existence. Oh, can you pardon me?" Instead of answering her, I pressed my lips upon her forehead; she felt my tears flow. After having kissed my hands several times, she said to me, "Now I feel better, my good father, now I am, as our rules say, here, dead to the world. I wish to make some dispositions in favour of several persons, but, as all I possess is yours, will you authorize me, my good father?" "Can you doubt it? but I beseech you," said I to her, "do not indulge in these sad thoughts; by-and-by you shall employ yourself in this duty; you have time enough." "Undoubtedly, my good father, I have yet much time to live," added she, with an accent that, I know not why, made me shudder. I looked at her more attentively; but no change in her features justified my uneasiness. "But I must not occupy myself longer with terrestial things, for to-day I renounce all which attached me to the world. I beseech you do not refuse me." "Direct me: I will do every thing you wish." "I should wish that my tender mother would alway keep in the little back parlour where she usually sits, my embroidery frame, with the tapestry I have begun in it." "Your wishes shall be fulfilled, my child: your room has remained exactly as it was the day you left the palace; for every thing belonging to you is an object of religious worship to us. Clemence will be deeply touched at your rememberance of her." "As to you, my good father, take, I beg you, my large ebony chair, in which I have thought, have dreamed so much." "It shall be placed by the side of mine in my working cabinet, and I shall see you in it every day, seated beside me, as you used to sit." Could I tell her this, and restrain my tears? "Now I should wish to leave some memorials to those who took so much interest in me when I was unfortunate. To Madame Georges I give my writing-desk. This gift will be appropriate," added she, with a sweet smile, "for it was she at the farm who began to teach me to write. As to the venerable curate of Boqueval, who instructed me in religion, I destine for

him the beautiful Christ in my oratory." "Good, my child." "I should like to send my bandeau of pearls to my good little Rigolette. It is a simple ornament that she can wear on her beautiful black hair; and then, since you know where Martial and La Louve are in Algiers, I wish this courageous woman, who saved my life, to have my enamelled cross. These different pledges of remembrance, my good father, I should wish to have sent to them *from Fleur de Marie.*" "I will execute your wishes; have you forgotten no one?" "I believe not, my good father." "Think carefully: among those who love you, is there not one very unhappy; as unhappy as your mother and myself; one, finally, who regrets as deeply as we do your entrance into the convent?" The poor child understood me; she pressed my hand; a slight blush coloured her pale face. Anticipating a question which she feared, undoubtedly, to ask me, I said to her, "He is better; they no longer fear for his life." "And his father?" "He, too, is better. And Henry, what will you give him? A remembrance from you will be such a dear, such a precious consolation to him." "My father, offer him my *prie-dieu.* I have often watered it with my tears, in begging of Heaven strength to forget Henry, since I was not worthy of his love." "How happy he will be to see that you had a thought for him." "The house of asylum for orphans and young women abandoned by their relations, I should desire, my good father—"

* * * * * *

Here Rodolphe's letter was interrupted by the following words, which were almost illegible. "Clemence, Murphy will finish this letter; I have no longer any mind; I am distracted. Ah, the thirteenth of January!!!" The conclusion of this letter, in the handwriting of Murphy, was thus conceived:

MADAM,—In obedience to the orders of his royal highness, I complete this sad recital. The letters of my lord must have prepared your royal highness for the overwhelming news which it remains to me to acquaint you with. It was three o'clock; my lord was employed in writing to your royal highness; I was waiting in a neighbouring apartment to forward the letter immediately by the courier. Suddenly I saw the Princess Juliana enter with an air of consternation. "Where is his royal highness?" said she to me with a voice filled with emotion. "Princess, my lord is writing to the grand duchess." "Sir Walter, you

must inform my lord; a terrible event. You are his friend; from you the blow will be less terrible." I understood everything; I thought it more prudent to take this sad revelation upon myself, the superior having added that the Princess Amelia was slowly sinking away, and that my lord must hasten to receive the last sighs of his daughter. I entered the saloon. His royal highness perceived my paleness. "You have come to acquaint me of some misfortune." "An irreparable misfortune, my lord; courage." "Ah, my presentiments!" cried he; he ran to the cloister. I followed him. The Princess Amelia had been transported into her cell, after her last interview with my lord. One of the sisters was watching by her; at the end of an hour she perceived that the voice of the Princess Amelia, was becoming weaker, and that she was more depressed. The sister hastened to inform the superior; Doctor David was called; he hoped to remedy this new loss of strength by a cordial, but in vain; the pulse was scarcely perceptible; he saw, with despair, that reiterated emotions had exhausted the strength of the Princess Amelia; there remained no hope of saving her. My lord arrived. Princess Amelia had just received the last sacrament; a ray of intelligence still lingered about her; in one of her hands crossed on her bosom, was the *remains of her little rose-bush.* My lord fell on his knees by her pillow; he sobbed "My daughter! my beloved child!" in a heart-rending tone. The Princess Amelia heard him, turned her head gently towards him, opened her eyes, endeavoured to smile, and feebly said, "My good father, pardon; Henry also; my good mother, pardon." These were her last words. After an hour of silent agony, she gave up her spirit to God. When his daughter had yielded up her last sigh, my lord did not say a word; his calmness was frightful; he closed the eyes of the princess, kissed her forehead again and again, took piously the remains of the little rose-bush, and left the cell. I followed him; he returned to the house without the cloister, and showing me the letter that he had begun to write to your royal highness, and to which he in vain attempted to add some words, he said to me, "It is impossible for me to write. I am annihilated; my mind is gone. Write to the grand-duchess that I no longer have a daughter." I have executed the orders of my lord. Permit me, as his oldest servant, to beseech your royal highness to hasten your return as soon as the health of the Count d'Orbigny will permit it. Your presence alone can calm

the despair of the prince. He wishes to watch every night by his daughter till the day when she will be buried in the grand-ducal chapel. I have accomplished my sad task, madam: be so kind as to excuse the incoherence of this letter, and accept the expression of respectful devotion with which I have the honour to be your royal highness's very obedient servant,

WALTER MURPHY.

* * * * * *

The night before the funeral service of the Princess Amelia, Clemence arrived at Gerolstein with her father. Rodolphe was not alone the day of the funeral of Fleur de Marie.

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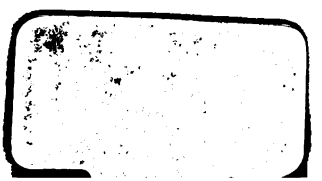
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